

Quarterly of the California Historical Society



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NOTE BY THE PUBLICATION COMMITTEE

SOME time ago it was suggested that an entire issue of this *Quarterly* might well be devoted to the Russian chapter of California history, and Dr. Charles L. Camp assumed the task of gathering such material. The result of his efforts is presented in this number, in which an attempt has been made to discover and reprint many early drawings of the Russian establishment at Fort Ross, as well as to present a picture of Russian activities on the coast of California from 1803, when the first joint American-Russian otter hunting expedition arrived, to 1842, when the settlement at Ross was disposed of.

A word respecting the authors here represented: Dr. E. O. Essig is Professor of Entomology at the University of California, and has for many years devoted much of his attention to the historical aspect of his subject. His researches in connection with the visits of Russian scientists to this coast led to his interest in the settlement at Ross. Miss Adele Ogden is a graduate student at the University of California. Dr. Clarence John DuFour is Vice President and Professor of History at the State Teachers College at San Francisco.

In order to make room for these important articles, we have omitted from this issue the usual "Check List of Western History," as well as the list of gifts to and meetings of the Society. These will be published in the December issue, in which the next installment of "The French Consulate in California, 1843-1856" will likewise appear.

CARL I. WHEAT

Chairman, Publication Committee.

Діалекти́я.



Quarterly of the California Historical Society

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THE RUSSIAN COLONIES IN CALIFORNIA

A RUSSIAN VERSION*

LA BODEGA, near San Francisco, was occupied by the Russians early in the year 1812, by permission of the Spanish government. The rich, fertile soil [and] the abundance of seal, otter and beaver were the principal factors which favored this colonization, and in a short time the colony had increased from a small number to about 800 persons. In 1815 the Russian colonists started several farms, on which the first steps in agriculture and also in the raising of cattle proved very successful. Twelve leagues from La Bodega, on the banks of the river San Sebastian, which the Russians called *Slavyanka* [Slav, or Russian] they built a fort where they raised the Russian flag, and they named it Fort Ross. This fort was to be the residence of the Russian governor. To the harbor at [Bodega Bay] they gave the name *Roumianzoff*. In 1827 the Mission of Santa Rosa was built, 6 miles [!] from the Russian colony, and the relations between the Russians and the Spaniards were always of the friendliest nature.

In 1840 the Russian colonies produced 2500 Spanish bushels (*fanegas*) of rye, which was exported to the Russians in the northern parts of the Russian Empire in America. To protect their colonies from Indian raids, the inhabitants had been given military training and were well armed.

In the year 1841, Fort Ross with all the farms in the vicinity, in other words, the whole Russian colony in California, was sold to a Swiss, well known to us, by the name of Sutter, who now plays the part of a prince in his little kingdom. The topography of this part of California is almost uniform. Parallel to the coast line is a range of mountains, behind which are very rich pasture lands and rich valleys

*This account of the Russian colonies in California is taken from T. Blok's *Brief Geographical-Statistical Description of California*, published in St. Petersburg by the Imperial Navy printing office in 1850, of which volume the material here published constitutes Chapter VII. Appreciation is due to Mrs. Henry Lanz, of Palo Alto, to Mr. Peter Nekrasoff, of Pomona College, and to Mr. Vladimir Nikolaeff, of San Francisco, for assistance in translating this material from the Russian, as well as to Mr. Nathan Van Patten, Librarian of the Stanford University Libraries, for the use of this book and for permission to reproduce the beautifully engraved map of California which it contains.

This map, which is here reproduced in its original size, is evidently derived from the map which Dr. Carl Hartmann published in his *Geographisch-statistische Beschreibung von Californien*, Weimar, 1849. Hartmann's map, in turn, was taken largely from that of De Moiras of 1844. The same appears to be largely true of the text of Blok's chapter, here published.

that are watered by many small streams. Most of the valleys are covered with timber. From Roumianzoff Harbor to the river Slavyanka the shore is covered with small pines, and farther [up the coast] near Barra de Arena, the trees can very easily be felled and floated to Fort Ross, and the Russians constructed a small shipyard there, where they built schooners and brigs. In the forests are great quantities of oak, mountain ash and more than 20 different varieties of pine, some of which attain the height of as much as 300 feet.

Along the whole coast all kinds of European fruit trees, and also tobacco, grapes, etc., grow and ripen. It is necessary to point out that the eastern part of this colony suffers greatly from continuous fog, which makes its products much poorer than those of the eastern side of the mountain range.

Fort Ross, having such a favorable location, is surrounded by fruit and vegetable gardens. The fort itself is in the form of a square, of 250 feet on each side. The residence of the Governor and of the other officers, the arsenal, the storehouses, the church and the barracks were all inside Fort Ross. The walls of the fort, which are 12 feet high, are fortified with crenelations [?] and at the corners are special double-decked bastions, each of which mounts six cannon. The neighboring farms are supplied with all comforts of life.

With reference to the climate of the former Russian colonies in California, we can report the following: There are no frosts, and the average [temperature is]

Winter.....	+7, 5°2 [7°, 52?]
Spring.....	+ 8°, 51
Summer temperature.....	+11°, 31
and Autumn.....	+10°, 00

The rainy season is from October to April, with southeasterly and westerly winds. The rest of the year the weather is beautiful, and the winds are mostly from the northeast. The declination of the compass is 16°W-e. Thunderstorms are so rare that the Indians have not even an expression for them. The position of Roumianzoff Harbor is as follows: N. latitude 13° 13' 30", longitude 123° 4' 5" W. from Greenwich. The time of high water is 8 hours, 21 min. 30 in the morning; and the high water is 6½ feet.

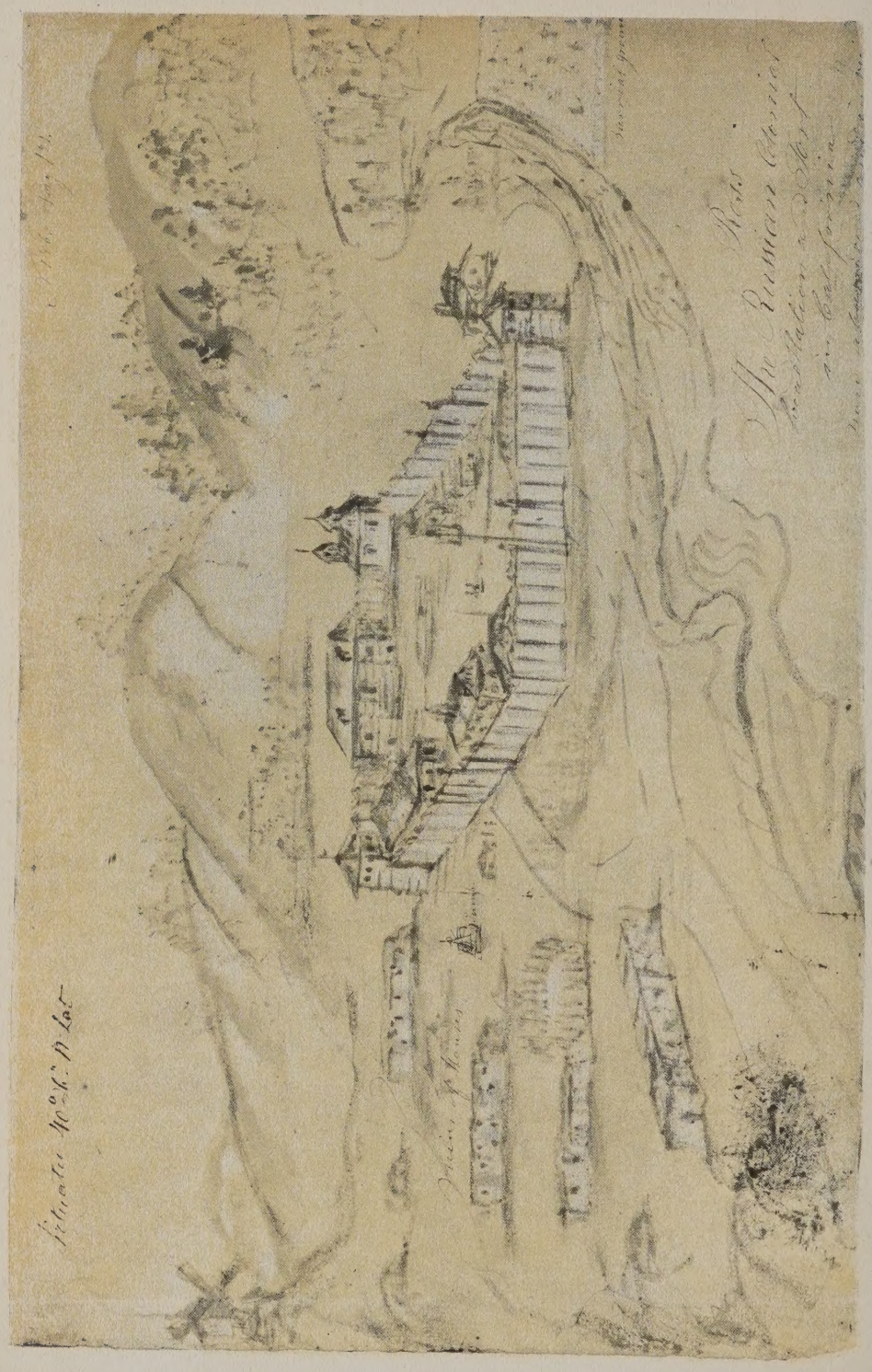
Situation N^o 1. N. 10. E.

1811 Aug 1st

View of the fort

Notes
The Russian Garrison
consisted of 2000
in California
was a strong

FORT ROSS IN THE FORTIES



THE RUSSIAN SETTLEMENT AT ROSS¹

THE RUSSIANS were interested in California primarily as a fur trading center and as a place for producing and securing food supplies for the fur hunters of the colonies in Kamchatka and Alaska, although it must be granted that they really desired to gain thereby a permanent foothold on the coast north of the Spanish settlements. This idea was conceived by Nikolai Petrovich Rezanof, one of the high officials of the Russian American Company, who in the ship *Unona* (*Juno*) called at San Francisco Bay in 1806 to secure much needed provisions for the Russian colonies in Alaska. He was so cordially received by the Spanish Commandant at the Presidio, José Argüello, and so generously treated and supplied by the Spanish Governor, José Joaquín de Arrillaga, that upon his return to Alaska he strongly advised the establishment of a colony on the California coast, north of San Francisco Bay, where fur hunting and agriculture might be pursued and a base established for the accumulation of foodstuffs secured by trading with the Spanish. Following these suggestions, Alexander A. Baranof,² Chief Director of the Russian American Company,³ dispatched Ivan A. Kuskof,⁴ from Sitka in 1808 in the ship *Kadiak*, to explore that portion of the California coast north of the Spanish settlements, and to select a site suitable for such a colony. Kuskof arrived at Trinidad on November 28, and reached Bodega Bay on December 28, where explorations gave way to the securing of sea-otter skins. After three months the expedition returned to Sitka with 1,453 skins. On February 21, 1811, Kuskof again reached Bodega Bay in the ship *Chirikoff*. This was also a hunting trip, resulting in the taking of 1,160 adult and 78 young sea-otter skins in San Francisco Bay by the Aleut fishermen in bidarkas. It was not until the spring of 1812 that Kuskof again reached Bodega Bay prepared to establish the settlement proposed by Rezanof. The site selected was a strip of bare tableland some two miles long and nearly a mile wide, on the coast eighteen miles north of Port Rumiantzof, the Russian name for Bodega Bay.

1. The writer is very greatly indebted to Rev. A. P. Kashevaroff, Curator of the Territory of Alaska Library and Museum, Juneau, Alaska, who is an authority on the Russian history of America, for his kind assistance in furnishing many important and interesting facts concerning the Russians at the colony of Ross. A bibliography of accounts of the Fort Ross settlement is printed at the conclusion of this article.

2. Russian names end in "i," "ii," "of," "eff," or "v," according to the translation into English. The accents frequently used in connection with the names of Rezanof and Baranof are Spanish renditions of the Russian, as the Russian language has no acute accents.

3. The Russian American Company was first organized by Gregory Shelekhof with some two hundred members. The first American colony was established at Kodiak in 1784. In 1788 the Company received exclusive control over the Alaskan district from the Empress Catherine, and in 1799 it was given a monopoly of Alaskan commerce for twenty years under the name of the Russian American Company. Its charter was always regranted whenever it expired and the Company virtually ruled Alaska until Dec. 31, 1861, shortly before the latter was purchased by the United States in 1867.

Managers of the Russian American Company, Chief Administrators, Directors, or Governors of Russian America with headquarters at Sitka, during the occupation of Fort Ross were: 1799-1817—A. A. Baranof; 1818-19—L. A. Hagemeister; 1819-21—Yanovsky (as a representative of Hagemeister); 1821-26—M. N. Mouravieff; 1826-31—Christiakoff; 1831-36—F. P. Wrangell; 1836-40—P. Kouprianoff; 1840—Etholin.

4. "Ivan Alexandrovich Kuskof, a merchant of Totma, came to America with Baranof, in the capacity of clerk. He was soon appointed assistant, and as we shall see entrusted with important commands. He left the service of the company in 1821, returned to Russia by way of Okhotsk in 1822, and died at Totma in 1823." Bancroft, *History of Alaska*, 1730-1885, p. 356.

Russian commandants or directors at Fort Ross were: 1812-21—Ivan A. Kuskof; 1821-26—Karl Schmidt; 1826-29—Paul Shelikoff; 1829-41—A. G. Rotchef.

Work on the settlement was begun on March 15, 1812. Because of the fortifications, the place became known to the Spaniards as *Fuerto de los Rusos* and to the English-speaking settlers as Fort Ross. The Russians, however referred to it as Ross, Fort Ross, or the Colony Ross.⁵ The fort was built on a bluff one hundred and ten feet (one hundred sixteen steps) above the ocean beach. It consisted of a rectangular space 300 x 280 feet,⁶ surrounded by a stockade made of eight-inch redwood planks imbedded in solid logs⁷ buried three feet in the ground, twelve feet high, mortised at the top into a horizontal timber and surmounted by iron spikes. (Kashevaroff says wooden palings three feet high.) There were twenty loopholes in the stockade. At the northwest corner was an octagonal bastion twenty-five feet in diameter, two stories high with fourteen port holes; and a similar structure twenty-eight feet in diameter at the southeast corner with sixteen port holes. The chapel occupied the northeast corner and also is said to have had port holes. Inside the stockade also were the commandant's house, soldiers' and officers' barracks, kitchen, warehouses, and jail. On the outside were blacksmith shop, tannery, boathouse, cooper's shop, bakery, carpenter's shop, mill for grinding flour, threshing floors, well, stable, sheep cote, dairy house, cow stables, hog pen, corral, ten sheds, eight baths, ten kitchens, and twenty-four houses for the Aleut fishermen and their families. When finished the fort is said to have had nine buildings and a well within the enclosure and fifty buildings outside. All were hewn out of redwood⁸ with some slight use of oak and Douglas fir. The fort was dedicated on September 11 (August 30, Julian calendar), 1812, but was not entirely completed until 1814. The whole site contained approximately one thousand acres. The first settlers numbered ninety-five Russians (*promyshleniki*) and eighty Aleut hunters, all of whom were brought from Sitka by Kuskof, who not only built the fort, but was commandant for the first nine

5. Kashevaroff, A. P. "In the account of W. Potiekhin on the settlement of Ross, he says the name was selected from lots drawn which were put at the base of the image of the Savior. The name Ross was drawn and bestowed on the settlement during the dedication of the Fort on August 30, 1812. This date according to the Gregorian calendar would make it September the 11th. The Russians reckoned the dates by the Julian calendar, which in 1800 was 12 days behind the Gregorian calendar. In 1900 it is 13 days behind."

6. Measurements of the enclosure have been given by different writers, as follows: 300 x 250 ft., 275 ft. square, 1088 ft. and 1190 ft. in circumference. Concerning this point Rev. A. P. Kashevaroff, in a letter dated November 11, 1927, writes:

"To your request to give the size of the quadrangle, I give you two versions. Khlénikoff, in his work—"The material for the history of Russian settlements on shores of the Eastern Ocean," gives the size as 42 x 29 sazens in a square. Bancroft, using the same figures on page 483 in footnote, calls them fathoms. In the Russian-American dictionary by Alexandroff, a sazén is computed as 7 English feet. This gives us 994 feet in the quadrangle. Potiekhin, whom I quoted in my article in the Alaska Magazine, [see below] gives us 1190 feet, computing a sazén as 7 feet. As to the number and location of the buildings, Potiekhin enumerates them as I reproduced them in my article in the Magazine. Khlénikof mentions 'The director's house, barracks, warehouse, or magazine, barn, kitchen, shops, bath house, wind mill, and other buildings finished in 1814.' Their location is given by Potiekhin, but not by Khlénikof. Historian Tikhménef does not give the dimension of the quadrangle. Golovnin simply gives description of the location and the amount of agricultural work accomplished."

See also Kashevaroff, A. P., "Fort Ross, an Account of Russian Settlement," in *Alaska Magazine*, Vol. I, 1927, p. 236, and Document X in article by C. J. DuFour, printed in this number of the Quarterly.

7. An examination of the trenches recently dug to replace the missing stockade revealed no such buried logs. The planks were simply buried about three feet in the earth.

8. Tikhménef refers to the redwood as red pine, similar to larch. Khlénikof writes of the "cedar, or as they are called here, red pine, which is of excellent quality, fine grain and beautiful red-brown color," and says that they "are generally high, straight and very thick. There was one near the Fort the thickness of which I measured near the roots and found the circumference 33 feet or 11 feet in diameter." Khlénikof, K., "Letters on America," 1861. (See Bibliography.)

years of its existence. The fort was first armed with twelve cannon,⁹ which number was finally increased to forty-one. Land was soon fenced and prepared for planting barley, rye, buckwheat,¹⁰ maize, wheat, flax, poppy, beets, potatoes, cabbage, radishes, turnips, lettuce, beans, peas, melons, watermelons, pumpkins, garlic, hemp, and tobacco. The seed of many of these was obtained directly from the Spaniards. According to Khlébnikof:

The first peach tree was brought from San Francisco in 1814 on the schooner *Chirikoff* by Mr. Benzéman, and in 1820 fruit was already gathered from it.

L. A. Hagemeister brought grapevines from Lima in 1817 and peaches¹¹ from Monterey in 1818. In 1820 we planted there 100 trees—apple, pear, cherry, peach and bergamot, and though they were very small when planted they bore fruit in 1828.

Roses were brought from San Francisco and Palma Christi from the Sandwich Islands. The grapes were good and began to bear in 1813.

Watermelons, melons and pumpkins were planted by Mr. Kuskof and in good years 800 watermelons were gathered. Mr. Kuskof liked gardening and paid special attention to it and always had an abundance of beets, cabbages, turnips, radishes, lettuce, peas and beans. Radishes and turnips grow very large, but are not of good flavor. He supplied the vessels arriving there with vegetables and often pickled considerable quantities of beets and cabbage and sent them to Sitka. Potatoes were planted twice a year, but the yield was not large, six and seldom eight to a hill. Garden vegetables are often destroyed by gophers, which eat the young shoots. The fruit crop mostly depends upon the weather; when the summer is clear and little wind, the crop is good, but when the gales continue from May to September, and the sun is seldom visible, then the fruit will not grow. Mustard grows wild in many places and from three to six poods¹² have been gathered and sent to Sitka in a year, at the price of 20 rubles¹³ per pood; it grows wild and requires no cultivation.¹⁴

The orchard was set out on the hills about three-quarters of a mile behind and some five hundred feet above the enclosure and was protected from animals by a plank fence eight feet high. At the end of the Russian occupation in 1841 there were 207 apple, 29 peach, 10 pear, 10 quince, and 8 cherry trees listed. There was also a little orchard with more than 20 fruit trees and some vines.¹⁵

Livestock,¹⁶ including cattle, horses, sheep, goats, and swine were procured from the Spanish and raised in considerable numbers. In 1833 three large ranches were farmed:¹⁷ the Khlébnikof Ranch of about 70 acres, mostly fenced, at Fort Ross, the Kostromitinof Ranch of 100 acres just south of the mouth of the Slavyanka (Russian) River, where a boat was kept for crossing, and the Tschernikh Ranch (Gorgy's or Don Jorge's Rancho)—also known as the half-way ranch, at the Russian Gulch about five miles north of Bodega Bay. It had a vineyard of 2000 vines and a few fruit trees.¹⁸ All of these places were provided with

9. The cannon were of small caliber. It was the custom of the Russians to keep cannon loaded with grape shot and to inspect them carefully once a week.

10. According to G. W. Hendry: "It seems probable that rye and buckwheat may have been direct importations from Russia since they had not been previously mentioned in California, except in connection with the French La Pérouse expedition, and have not been found in adobe buildings of the Spanish period. Moreover the Russian authors mention them in connection with voyages which make a Russian origin seem possible."

11. All evidences of the grapes and peaches have long since disappeared.

12. A pood equals 36.113 pounds.

13. A ruble equals \$0.515.

14. Khlébnikof, K. "Letters on America," 1861. (See Bibliography.)

15. See Document X in article by C. J. DuFour.

16. The maximum number of cattle was 2,000, horses 1,000, sheep 1,000.

17. See map in Bancroft, *History of California*, II, p. 629.

18. See Document X in article by C. J. DuFour.

dwellings, storehouses, baths, corrals, fences, etc. Besides providing for their own needs, the settlers exported potatoes, wheat and other cereals, fruits, tobacco, butter, leather,¹⁹ and dried salt beef. These were largely sent to Sitka and Kodiak as there were no markets in California excepting the Presidios at San Francisco and Monterey where some butter was sold. As there were very few iron workers in all northern Spanish California, the Russians at Ross carried on an extensive trade of metal goods with the Spaniards at the Missions for wheat and livestock. When oxen were substituted for horses as draught animals, the California plow was replaced by the more efficient ones from Russia.²⁰ A windmill for grinding flour was erected on the hill outside the stockade west of the enclosure and was still standing when John Bidwell took charge for Captain John Sutter in 1842. In addition to agricultural products the Russians gathered large quantities of bird eggs at the Farallones and also killed great numbers of birds and sea-lions²¹ there for food at Ross and for export to Kodiak and Sitka. Fish and wild game also contributed largely to their supply of food.

Sea-otter hunting along the California coast was the chief attraction to the Russians, and at first proved to be exceedingly profitable. As has been noted, in 1808, Kuskof in the ship *Kadiak* procured 1453 full-grown and young sea-otters, and in 1811, when he made another trip to California, his Aleut fishermen penetrated San Francisco Bay, and in that harbor secured 1160 full-grown and 78 young sea-otters. A camp was also established on the Farallones²² and evidences of the earth and stone huts are still in existence. Between 1812 and 1815 the number of otter captured decreased to only 714 full-grown and 163 young. In 1819 only ten full-grown and three young were taken. Thus this most important occupation subsequently ceased. Karl Schmidt, the second commandant, then tried ship-building, but the unseasoned timber²³ was found entirely unfit, and of

19. There was an abundance of tan oak, *Lithocarpus densiflora* (H. & A.), the bark of which has long since been of great value in tanning leather and one of the chief articles of export in early days of Sonoma, Mendocino, Humboldt, and Del Norte counties, California.

Hides were tanned and made into sole leather and uppers and sent to Sitka. In 1827 the output was 66 hides for sole leather; in 1828, 67 hides for sole leather and 20 hides for uppers; in 1829, 90 hides for sole leather. Uppers were blackened by the use of alder bark and iron dross.—D. Zavalishin.

20. Plows used at Fort Ross were from Russia, Finland, Siberia, and California. Most of the agricultural implements were made in the shops at Sitka. In 1841 there were listed 26 horse plows, 19 ox plows and 2 native plows. (See Document X in article by C. J. DuFour.)

21. At the Farallones 200 sea-lions were killed annually to provide skins and sinews for the bidarkas, meat and blubber for food, bladders for waterproof clothing, and oil for lamps.

In 1828, 50,000 gulls and other sea-birds were killed and dried, totalling 100 *poods* in weight. The feathers and down obtained amounted to 330 *poods* and were valued at 20 rubles per *pood*.

22. Between 1809 and 1812 the Farallones furnished 150,000 skins of sea-otter and fur-seal, which brought between \$1.50 and \$2.00 apiece in China. Between 1812 and 1818, 8,427 sealskins were obtained. (See article by Adele Ogden in this number of the *Quarterly*; also Hoover, Mildred, *The Farallon Islands, California*, Stanford University Press, 1932.)

23. The most abundant and largest oak at Fort Ross is the tan oak, *Lithocarpus densiflora* (H. & H.), which is entirely unsuited for most building purposes. The following vessels were built at Fort Ross: "Brig-Schooner *Rumiantseff*, 160 tons, launched 1819, used until 1823; Brig *Buldakoff*, 200 tons, built in 1820; cruised along the coast as far as Santa Barbara; made several trips to Sitka, bringing supplies (in 1826 it was so far gone that it was beached and used for storage); the ship *Volga* launched 1822, 160 tons; was in commission until 1827, when it was found so far decayed as to be unseaworthy, and was loaded with wood and sent to the island of Atka, where it was used as a storehouse; the brig *Kiakhta*, 200 tons, was launched in 1824; she was built of pine, with oak ribs and keel. This vessel made several trips up and down the coast; and one trip to the Aleutian Islands." (Kashevaroff, A. P., *The Alaska Magazine*, Vol. I, No. 5, p. 238.) "In addition to these ships the Russians at Fort Ross in 1823 traded an old row boat to the Commandant Martinez at San Francisco for 125 fanegas of wheat; built in 1826 a new boat with sails and rigging for the Mission at San Francisco for 1,200 piastres; and in 1827 also built a fully-equipped barge for the Mission San José for 1,500 piastres." (Letter from A. P. Kashevaroff.)

the four ships built none was profitable. Had suitable seasoned timber been used, as has later been proved, this venture might have been the source of revenue to the company. The settlers also made tar from fir and barrels from Douglas fir and possibly redwood, and made bricks and leather, all of which were sent to Alaska. The development of a profitable agriculture was also a complete failure, due chiefly to the lack of trained farmers and also to the poor quality of the land and unfavorable climatic conditions so near the coast. The most desired crop was wheat, which did not thrive because of the infertility of the soil and the cool, foggy summers. Stem rust was probably the most important single factor in the failure of this crop, although in the opinion of Kuskof, the shortage was due to the great number of birds damaging the grain (Potiekhin). Bearing on the same point Khlébnikof states: "Many black sparrows [Brewer's blackbirds?], which are called 'chanati' by the Spaniards do great damage to the ripening crops of grain." According to Tikhménef:

In 1833 wild oats made its appearance in many fields in such abundance as to smother the wheat and the only means to suppress it was to pasture cattle on the fields for several years, thus depriving the settlement of valuable land necessary for the production of the amount of breadstuffs required. The continuous ravages of mice and gophers, which devoured the root of the grain, also caused considerable losses of supplies already scant.

The yield of wheat during the first few years at Fort Ross was as follows:

1813 sowed	65	pounds and harvested	165	pounds.
1814	"	200	"	"
1815	"	200	"	"
1816	"	574	"	"
1817	no harvest.			

The best year for wheat was 1823 and the best years for barley were 1822 and 1824 when the return was 10 and 11 to 1. It is also related by Khlébnikof that whereas this poor showing was made at Ross, wheat at the Spanish Missions yielded 40 to 1, while Zavalashin noted that "the crops [of the Spanish] even by their carelessness [of the Indian laborers] is from 30 to 60 times [for one grain]." Fruit, potatoes, vegetables, and field crops did much better.

In addition to what has already been said concerning the production of potatoes at Ross, it is well to point out the fact that this crop was also produced in parts of Alaska and that the seed planted there was obtained both from Siberia and California. Khlébnikof states that at Sitka as much as 160,000 pounds per year were raised. Tikhménef relates that at Ross the "yield was not less than 11 to 1, while there have been instances of 250 having been found in one hill, and consequently this one item would have been enough to insure the subsistence of the settlement, if it had not been for the multitude of underground moles [gophers] which destroyed large quantities and made a great reduction in the company's provisions."

Livestock found excellent pasturage excepting in the fall of the year, when there was little or no food available. From the viewpoint of economic and scientific development, Fort Ross, with its many and varied activities, was far ahead of any other settlement in California, and yet it was the first to pass into obscurity.

Economically the venture of occupation in California, from which so much was expected, was a complete failure. Had the management imported skilled farmers from their own country, the result would have been gratifying, but the men²⁴ who worked at Fort Ross were ignorant of agriculture. The ground was never properly tilled.

In 1833 there were fifty Russians at this post, all artisans with no training as farmers; as for the rest, they were all from Alaska, where farming was unknown. The Russians, together with 88 creoles, 83 Aleuts and 72 Indian laborers comprised the population of the Fort, although as many as 150 California Indians were employed at times. The Russians, creoles and Aleuts were either on salaries or employed as day laborers; the California Indians, working at the settlement were paid in food, clothing, etc.

The settlement was managed locally by a director and two assistants who acted as overseers or clerks, and from their reports we have the figures²⁵ to show that while maintenance costs increased yearly, the revenue decreased.

At a casual glance it is quite evident that Fort Ross was rather a white elephant in the hands of the Russians—it did not help the Colonies in the North; it was rather an expensive burden, yet the Russian American Company lived in hopes of making it pay.²⁶

Conditions at Fort Ross in 1836 are graphically related in the following which I received from Rev. A. P. Kashevaroff under date of January 28, 1928:

Among the very rare manuscripts in the Alaska Territorial Library there is an original travel journal kept by Father Ivan Veniaminov during his trip to California covering the period between July 1 and October 13, 1836. Under July 15, we read: "Arrived at Fort Ross." His description of the settlement follows: "There are twenty-four houses in the Fort and few cabins in the enclosure. Two bastions on the stockade. Inside the enclosure are: chapel, commandant's house, office, warehouse, barracks, and some dwellings for distinguished guests. There are one hundred and fifty-four males and one hundred and six females and in all two hundred and sixty persons, of which one hundred and twenty are Russians, fifty-one creoles, fifty Kodiak Aleuts and thirty-nine baptized Indians."

Father Veniaminov left Fort Ross on horseback on the 23rd day of August. First he visited the Mission of San Rafael where he arrived at four in the evening of the 24th. Here he met Father Quijos, the Padre in Charge. He crossed the San Francisco Bay in a row boat, met with some stormy weather and was obliged to land on an island, probably Angel Island, where he was compelled to spend the night. On September 3rd he visited the Mission San Jose. Here he met Father Joseph a tem. Gonzales. On the 7th he visited the Mission Santa Clara, where he was entertained by Father Jesus Moreno. He also visited the Mission Dolores at San Francisco, but does not mention the Padre in charge. At all these missions he was very courteously and kindly treated and very hospitably entertained. He speaks of the uniform respect, and honor accorded him. I am mentioning this, because I have seen so many statements to the contrary, especially in the Russian press. On September 23rd he sailed for Sitka, where he arrived on October 13, 1836.

One of the last achievements of the Russians in California was the ascent of Mount St. Helena in Napa County. This peak, which is 4,343 feet high, is the most conspicuous mountain in the country adjacent to Ross. The feat was accom-

24. Only a few unskilled men were employed in agricultural pursuits and they were often engaged in other pursuits. Khlébnikof gives the number as twelve. Concerning these workmen on the farms, Zavalishin states that, excluding a few, they were the worst of the worst.

25. Cost of maintenance, labor and tools: In 1825—42,030 rubles; 1826—41,913 rubles; 1827—43,199 rubles; 1828—47,638 rubles; 1829—49,391 rubles; total—224,171 rubles.

Revenue from furs (sea-otters, fur-seal and hair-seal) caught on the Farallon Islands: 1826—15,967 rubles; 1827—813 rubles; 1828—53 rubles; 1829—2,189 rubles; 1830—1,667 rubles; total—20,689 rubles.

Revenue from agriculture, cattle, hides, and manufactured products: 1826—20,904 rubles; 1828—3,619 rubles; 1829—16,253 rubles; 1830—3,097 rubles; total—43,852 rubles; total revenue—64,542 rubles.

26. Kashevaroff, Rev. A. P., *Alaska Magazine* Vol. I, 1927, pp. 238-39.

plished by the scientist, I. G. Vosnesensky, who was accompanied by the agriculturist and amateur entomologist, G. Tschernikh on June 12, 1841. Thompson, who wrote in 1896, declared:

He named it St. Helena in honor of his imperial mistress the Empress of Russia and, planting a post on its highest point, he nailed to it a copper plate²⁷ inscribed with the name he had given the mountain, his own name and that of his companion with the date of the ascent and the word "Russians" twice repeated, once in Russian, once in Latin. The mountain has ever since retained the name given to it in this notable christening, and will stand forever as an enduring monument of the most easterly and most southerly point touched by the Russians in their advance across Siberia and the Pacific Ocean to northwest America, and thence down the coast of California.²⁸

There is much confusion and misunderstanding regarding this event. There appear to be no Russian records to throw any light upon it and a great deal of the legendary type of information has arisen. Thompson gave two versions of the now commonly accepted story as given above. And as a matter of fact this mountain is not as far south as Fort Ross, disregarding Bodega Bay, so he was clearly wrong in his very last assertion.

Gertrude Atherton²⁹ repeats Thompson's first version that Commandant Alexander Rotchef³⁰ first climbed the mountain and named it for his wife, the beautiful Princess Helena de Gagarin,³¹ niece of the Czar of Russia. Thompson at first held to this story, which he revised in 1896.

Miss Honoria Tuomey,³² who has given this matter much careful study, relates a much more elaborate christening ceremony. According to her view a party headed by Commandant Rotchef and consisting also of his wife, the Princess Helena, Dr. W. A. Vosnesensky,³³ E. L. Tchernikh,³⁴ Manuel MacIntosh, an American who lived near the Russian settlements, a guard of soldiers, and an

27. In 1853 this plate was discovered by Dr. T. A. Hylton and a copy of it preserved by Mr. H. L. Weston of Petaluma. The metal slab is octagonal in shape and bears the following words in the Russian language: "Russians, 1841, June, E. L. Voznisenki iii, E. L. Chernich. (*History of Napa and Lake Counties*, 1881, p. 98.)

Under date of Aug. 23, 1927, James A. Daly, County Clerk of Napa County wrote me that the metal plate was stolen by some vandals some years ago. He also added the following: "I recall visiting the site of the copper plate in 1884, and read the inscription, which is in Russian, which I could not clearly translate, although June, 1841 and the three 'iii' are indelibly fixed in my mind."

28. Thompson, R. A., *The Russian Settlement in California Known as Fort Ross*, Santa Rosa, Calif., 1896, p. 34.

29. *Californian Illustrated Magazine*, Vol. 5, 1893, pp. 57-62.

30. Rev. A. P. Kashevaroff kindly furnished the following biographical notes:

"Rotchef, Alexander Gavriolovich (1813-1873). Writer, graduate of the Moscow University; translated a great deal from Schiller, Shakespear, and Victor Hugo; wrote lyric poems; traveled in southern Europe, Asia, Africa, and America; sent travelogues from all these points to journals and newspapers. In 1850 he wrote exclusively for *The St. Petersburg Wedomosty* and *The St. Petersburg Police Leaflet*. Prior to the Crimean war he published a brochure—*The truth about England and the expansion of its possessions in all parts of the World* (1854). In the latter part of 1860 he served in Tashkent and took part in editing *The Turkestan Wedomosty*. At the close of his life he was collaborator in *Saratov Leaflets of Information*. He also published 'The Reminiscences of a Russian Traveler in the West Indies, California and East Indies,' Panteon, Vol. 7 (1854)."

31. Concerning Princess Gagarin, Kashevaroff writes:

"I find a number of Princes Gagarin in the Encyclopedia by Brokhaus and Efron. From the number of Gagarins enumerated I select Paul Pavlovich Gagarin (1789-1872). I find that Gagarins were very prominent in scientific and diplomatic service and were of high social standing, but in no way related to the Royal Family. In the life of Father Veniaminov, dated Sitka, Alaska, April 29, 1842, the Father mentioned that Alexander Gavriolovich Rotchef and Helena Pavlovna are leaving for Europe. The Pavlovna is the first name of her father. It is the Russian custom to use the father's first name for the middle name of all the children of the family."

32. Tuomey, Honoria, and Emparan, Luisa Vallejo, *Mission, Presidio and Pueblo of Sonoma*, 1923, pp. 73-85; also Tuomey, Honoria, "Historic Mount Saint Helena," *Quarterly of the California Historical Society*, Vol. III, No. 2, July, 1924, pp. 171-77.

33. This no doubt refers to I. G. Vosnesensky.

34. His name is correctly spelled "Tschernikh." His first name is given as George. (See Document X accompanying article by C. J. DuFour.)

Indian guide, climbed the mountain. A ceremony was performed by the Princess Helena, who named the mountain, Saint Helena, in honor of the patron Saint of the Imperial Mistress, Helena, Empress of Russia,³⁵ and placed the copper plate on a block of volcanic tufa rock. On the return the party was captured by the Indian chief Solano and was saved only by the intervention of General M. G. Vallejo of the Presidio of Sonoma. Miss Tuomey stated that her sources of information were descendants of General Vallejo and certain parties who had heard this story related by a Russian soldier who claimed to have been one of the party. It seems highly improbable, however, that Rotchef, Commandant of Fort Ross, should have planned such an elaborate christening and placed only the names of Vosnesensky and Tschernikh on this previously prepared copper plate, and should have withheld his own and that of his wife, who are said to have figured so prominently in the episode.

The copper plate which was removed from Mount Saint Helena by Dr. T. A. Hylton, of Petaluma, in May, 1853, was later turned over to the Museum of the Society of California Pioneers and was destroyed in the San Francisco fire of April, 1906. A paper copy of the plate, however, was presented to H. L. Weston, also of Petaluma, who preserved it and turned it over to Miss Tuomey, who was responsible for having it duplicated in copper and placed in the resting place of the original plate on top of the mountain in 1912 on the one-hundredth anniversary of the founding of Fort Ross.

Because of the encroachments of American settlers,³⁶ the continued antagonism of the Mexican rulers in California, the failing supply of sea-otter furs and other skins, and the failure of the agricultural activities, it was apparent that Russian expansion in this part of North America was futile. A mission to Mexico by Wrangell³⁷ to secure, by cession or sale, more suitable land east of Fort Ross, including the Pueblo of Sonoma and the Mission San Rafael, having proved a

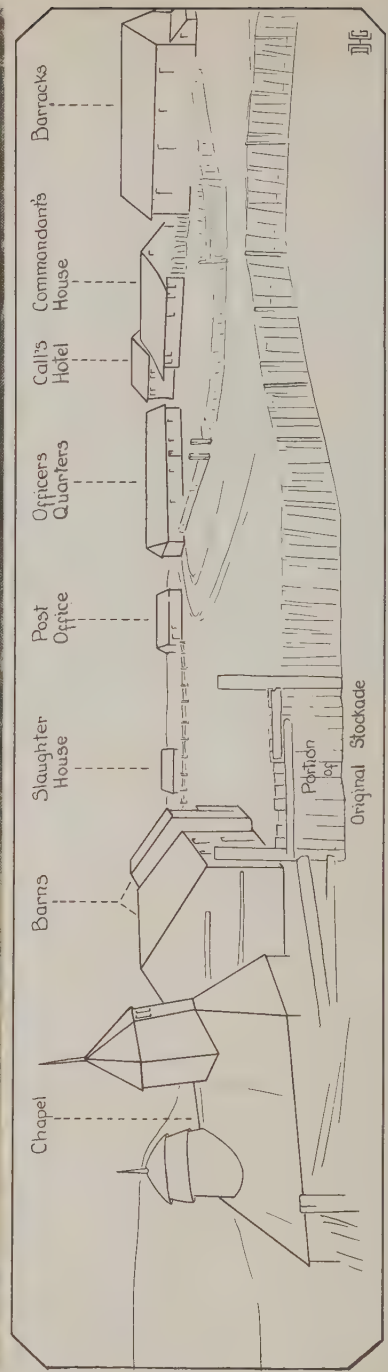
35. In commenting upon this name, Rev. A. P. Kashevaroff states that the "Russians named many places in Alaska for the Saint honored the day a discovery was made. St. Constantine and St. Helena are honored on May 21 by the Julian Calendar, which would be on the 3d of June according to the Gregorian Calendar in the 19th Century." This suggests that June 3d rather than June 12th was the day of the christening.

36. Concerning the aggressiveness of the American settlers, Zavalishin makes the following statement: "Meanwhile the Americans of the U. S. not asking permission, settled upon the places not occupied by us and this circumstance made fruitless, in all possibility even the very consent of Mexico, in case if it had been given. The Americans, indeed, would not give up the places occupied by them, and this unavoidably would surely lead to those reenounters with the U. S. to avoid which seemingly we did firmly resolve to act as before. In such a position there was nothing more left, either direct to encounter these reenounters, having in view endless perspective troubles and losses, or to abandon the Colony. The latter was chosen."

It has been stated by some more modern historians that "due to the insistence of Great Britain that Russia live up to their treaty of 1824, to retire north of 54-40, the Russian Government had been forced to abandon its California posts." (The Knave, *Oakland Tribune*, Oct. 11, 1931.)

Bancroft, *History of Calif.*, II, p. 647, explains this point as follows: "Motras, *Exploration*, II, pp. 6-7, notes that in the treaties of April 5, 1824, and Feb. 16, 1825, between Russia, the United States, and England, by which the former agreed to found no establishments south of 54° 40', no mention is made of California."

37. Baron F. P. Wrangell was the Russian Governor referred to by Dana at the beginning of Chapter XXVII in *Two Years before the Mast*, "who was going in her [the Government bark in Monterey Bay] to Mazatlan and thence overland to Vera Cruz. He offered to take letters and deliver them to the American consul at Vera Cruz, whence they could be easily forwarded to the United States. We accordingly made up a packet of letters, almost every one writing, and dating them 'January 1st, 1836.' The Governor was true to his promise and they all reached Boston before the middle of March; the shortest communication ever yet made across the country." (Page 292 of the 1911 edition.)



FORT ROSS AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE OF APRIL 18, 1906

failure, it was finally decided on April 15, 1839, by the authorities in Russia,³⁸ to abandon Ross. This was put into execution as soon as possible after word to that effect reached the Commandant, Alexander Rotchef. He and P. Kostromitino, agent for the Russian American Company at Yerba Buena, endeavored to dispose of the property to General M. G. Vallejo, who lived at the nearby pueblo Sonoma, but could make no terms with him. However the property was finally sold to Captain John A. Sutter of New Helvetia for 42,857 rubles, 14 kopeks.³⁹ Of this amount Wrangell states that Sutter paid 7,000 piasters in 1850 and Golovin summed up the affair as follows:

Parts of this sum (the original price) were paid by Sutter at various times, but there remained unpaid \$15,000, the recovery of which was undertaken by the Company, under instructions from the Russian Ambassador to the United States, Bodisco, through the Russian Counsel at San Francisco, an American, Stewart, who absconded and stole the money received from Sutter and thus, with the expenses attending the several efforts to recover the money from Sutter, the Company was at a loss in their accounts with the Ross settlement to the amount of 37,484 rubles 45 kopeks.

The Russians⁴⁰ left Ross in December, 1841, and set sail from San Francisco on January 1, 1842, after twenty-nine years of occupation. The livestock, excepting a few hundred head, was driven overland while the cannon and movable valuables were transported to New Helvetia on the small twenty-ton boat, *Constantine*, renamed *Sacramento*, which was included in the purchase from the Russians. Sutter took what he needed from Ross, for it is recorded that the "lumber, windows and doors were taken to the settlement [New Helvetia] and used in finishing up of the fort [Sutter's Fort] and its buildings."⁴¹

After the departure of the Russians, Sutter assumed nominal control of Fort Ross through various agents. John Bidwell, the second of these, arrived in 1842 and is recorded as having made three barrels of cider there the same year. This appears to be the last of the early achievements on this historic spot. He remained in charge fourteen months.

In 1844 Sutter sent William Benitz to look after the property and the next year Benitz and Major Ernest Rufus leased the property from Sutter. In 1845,

38. Fully twenty years were given to the expansion, the development and the growth of Fort Ross; in all those years the Colony in Alaska received no material gain from their venture. This situation gave rise to the discussion of abandonment.

"The Colonial administration had many times pointed out the economic disadvantages of maintaining the Fort Ross settlement, but the Company was still sanguine of future returns that would repay all its investments.

"Finally in 1838, Captain Kuprianof, the chief administrator, transported all the Aleuts from Fort Ross to Kodiak, where their services were sorely needed to augment sea otter parties. It was only then that the Company admitted the futility of continuing such a losing venture.

"The Chief Directors of the Company reported to the Finance Minister in Russia with a complete statement of the yearly losses, and for illustration gave a detailed statement for the year 1837, in which it was pointed out that the maintenance of the settlement for that year had cost 45,000 rubles, while the returns from fur were only 22,000 rubles and from farming and byproducts only about 10,000 rubles. The Company asked permission in 1838 to abandon the settlement; this permission was granted in 1839, and finally acted upon in 1842." (Kashevaroff, A. P., *op. cit.*, p. 240.)

39. This is the amount given by Golovin. Other writers fixed the price at 30,000 piasters or \$30,000.

40. Some authors state that 400 people left Fort Ross for Alaska, but Sir George Simpson says: "At the time the Russians were abandoning it in 1842, I found about a hundred souls, men, women and children all patriotically delighted to exchange the lovely climate of California for the ungenial skies of Sitka, and that too, at the expense of making a long sea voyage in a crazy old tub, at the stormiest season of the year." The tub referred to was the *Constantine* which was afterwards turned over with other property to Sutter and was used by him to transport movable belongings from Fort Ross to New Helvetia.

41. Schoonover, T. J., *Life and Times of Gen. John A. Sutter*, Sacramento, 1907, p. 30.

also, the estate, as a part of the Muniz Rancho was granted to Manuel Torres by Governor Pio Pico. The original Muniz Rancho contained four square leagues or 17,760 acres and extended from the mouth of the Russian River on the south to a distance along the coast four miles north of Fort Ross and inland to Duncan Mills. It soon passed into the hands of Benitz, who paid \$6,000 to quiet the Russian title held by John Sutter. In 1859 Benitz sold to William Muldrew, who in turn sold to George Moore and Daniel W. Welty. Dixon and Lord Fairfax later acquired the Fort Ross ranch which was purchased by G. W. Call in 1873 and occupied by him in 1874. The property excepting the fort, is still in the possession of his widow and heirs.

Since the Russian occupation time and man have wrought havoc with this historic spot. The stockade was still standing in 1873. In 1880, it is recorded that ... the greater part of the stockade is gone. The public road passes through the middle of the enclosure from east to west. The old buildings are now used respectively for a saloon, hotel and storehouse, while the old chapel is profaned by being used as a stable. The bastions made excellent pigstys. They are tottering under the weight of years, and are moss-covered and worm-eaten, and will soon pass out of existence. There are at present one hotel, one saloon, one blacksmith shop, one store, one meat market, post and telegraph offices. The post office was established May 23, 1877, with George W. Call, postmaster.⁴²

The stockade was down in 1893, at which time the commandant's house was still used as part of the hotel. The north bastion was in fair condition, with upper floor and roof, and still served as a pig pen. The south bastion was without upper floor or roof. The gates were standing. The chapel was used as a stable, later as a grain storehouse, hay barn, and milk house. The orchard, which in 1841 consisted of a piece of land 330 x 144 feet and contained 260 trees of which 207 were apple, in 1893 numbered 200 trees, most of which had been planted by Benitz and Call after the departure of the Russians. A portion of the original fence was still standing and a remnant of the same was noted as late as 1922. The recent article by Kashevaroff⁴³ states: "The apple trees of the Russians at Fort Ross have brought a crop regularly every year for 113 years. In 1925 the yield was large. These trees escaped all the blights of California and old timers say it is because a Russian Priest sprinkled them with Holy Water when he planted them."⁴⁴ The oldest trees in the orchard were planted in 1820 and were 105 years old in 1925. The small orchards planted near the buildings outside the enclosure have long since disappeared as have also those planted at the vari-

42. *Hist. of Sonoma County*, 1880, p. 153.

43. *Op. cit.*, p. 242.

44. Bancroft tells us that an officer of the garrison was authorized by the bishop to baptise, marry and read funeral services. (*Hist. of Calif.*, II, p. 361.)

However Kashevaroff writes me that in the original "travel journal" kept by Father Ivan Veniaminov during his visit to California, July 1 to October 13, 1836 (now in the Alaska Territorial Library at Juneau) the entry for July 15 reads as follows: "Arrived at Fort Ross." On August 1, we have the following entry: "After instructing and confirming two adult Indians, I celebrated the holy liturgy, during which I gave the communion to all those who had been to confession and to the two who had been confirmed. After the liturgy I went to the river, where I blessed the water and then went around the stockade with a religious procession." In this connection of blessing the fruit trees Kashevaroff further notes: "The custom of the Russian church during such church processions, and especially after the blessing the water, was to sprinkle with the water blessed, all buildings, gardens, orchards, and everything that has been undertaken. No doubt the trees and all newly constructed buildings inside and outside were sprinkled with the blessed water. So, after all, the story of the 'old timers' is true."

ous distant ranches. Mice, gophers, and ground squirrels, did much damage to the trees and grain crops. The wheat was often completely destroyed by rust.

The neglected graveyard was shortly reduced to a wilderness with a few graves marked with decayed wooden enclosures still evident in 1893. Decay continued unabated and eventually the enclosure disappeared and the buildings disintegrated. Finally, through the efforts of the California Landmarks League, public opinion was sufficiently aroused to the value of this and other important landmarks and resulted in this league taking over Fort Ross from G. W. Call on July 25, 1903. Nothing, however, was undertaken in the way of reconstruction and the earthquake of 1906 demolished the chapel.

The property consisting of two parcels of land and involving 3.01 acres was transferred to the state on May 23, 1906. According to Milton J. Ferguson, State Librarian, it was deeded to the state by William Randolph Hearst.

Mr. Hearst purchased .56 of an acre from Solomon Shocken, price \$10.00 and 2.45 acres from J. J. Lerman, price \$3000.00. As you know, Mr. Hearst started a movement through the Examiner to raise funds for the preservation of the historic landmarks of California. This fund was used in the purchase of Fort Ross, Sonoma Mission and the theatre at Monterey. There were perhaps others. Mr. Hearst signed all of the deeds and contributed generously to the fund, yet it cannot be said that he was the sole donor.⁴⁵

The chapel was reconstructed by the state in 1915-1917.⁴⁶ Some of the building material used was taken from the officers' barracks which were completely demolished. In 1922 all that remained of the original buildings were the reconstructed chapel, partly restored commandant's residence, and the ruined bastions. In 1925, after nearly a century of rest, the Greek chapel opened its doors for worship on July 4th and services on this day have been held yearly since that time. On Sunday, September 23, 1928, the Historic Landmarks Committee of the Native Sons of the Golden West dedicated a bronze tablet marking the chapel. The tablet cast by the De Rome foundry of Oakland bears the following inscription:

This chapel was a part of the settlement founded by the Russians in 1812 and known as Fort Ross. The fort was in the form of a quadrangle, about 300 feet square, inclosed by a redwood wall, with two blockhouses at opposite corners. Fort Ross contained fifty-nine buildings, nine of which, including this chapel, were within the inclosure. The Russians withdrew in 1844,⁴⁷ selling their improvements and stock to John A. Sutter of Sutter's Fort. Property acquired by the State of California in 1906.⁴⁸

In 1926 new foundations were placed under the Commandant's house and in 1927 the south bastion was completely restored.

On September 9 and 10, 1927, I visited Fort Ross in order to see with my own eyes what was there and also to secure pictures.⁴⁹ When I beheld the fort from a distance I stopped and climbed the brown hills to secure a complete pano-

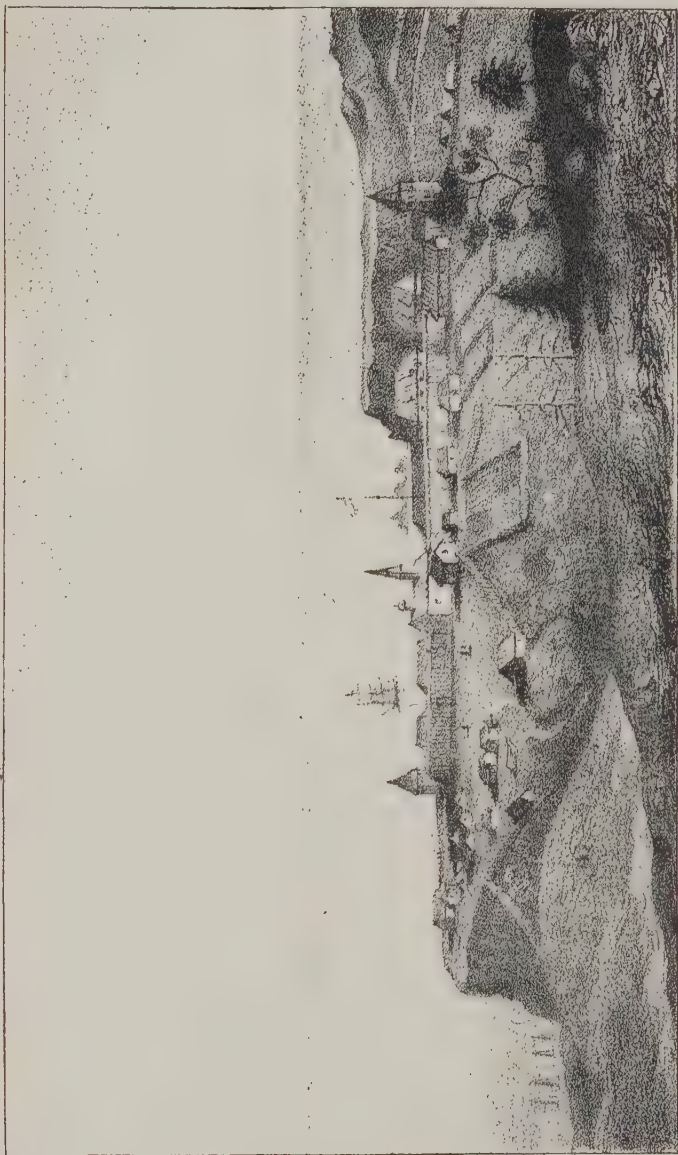
45. Letter dated at Sacramento, California, November 22, 1927.

46. In the reconstruction some changes are noted. The original chapel had but three windows on the south side and no window in the dome, while the restored building has four south windows and one in the dome. Early descriptions state that the inside measurements were 25 x 30 feet and make no mention of the partition which now divides the building into two rooms: 8 x 24 and 21 x 24 feet. One early writer mentions loop holes in the north and east walls, which are missing in the restoration, and which apparently did not exist.

47. The Russians formally withdrew in 1841-42, but an agent was left to conclude the deal with Sutter.

48. *Oakland Tribune*, p. 3, Sept. 22, 1928.

49. I returned again on October 6, 1927, and many times since.



From the City of London to the Pacific

*Vue de l'établissement russe de la Bodega,
à la Côte de la Nouvelle Albion, en 1828.*

(From a drawing in Duhaut-Cilly's *Voyage Autour du Monde*, Paris, 1835. The term "Bodega" is
an abbreviation for "East Bodega".)

rama of the whole place. The dry slippery grass was teeming with myriads of the common devastating grasshopper, *Melanoplus devastator* Scudder, which gave us a truly entomological welcome. I could not help but wonder why this insect did not figure in the early Russian writings. It will probably turn up in some of the museums of Russia along with the pellucid grasshopper, *Camnula pellucida* (Scudder), and also the sand or Jerusalem cricket, *Stenopelmatus longispina* Brunner, which were found common under the rocks near the old fort.

One is impressed with the desolation of the place. At this season there was nothing green or fresh between the border of trees on the hills and the incessant wash of the breakers on the rocky beach, except the small gardens and cypress windbreaks planted about the ranch houses, just beyond the old enclosure. The chapel dominated the scene garbed in somewhat offensive weatherworn paint. There was no stockade. The barracks, barns, gates, and shops had completely disappeared. The north bastion was reduced to a low mass of logs which were rapidly crumbling because of the effective work of wood-destroying white ants or termites.

On October 6, E. C. Van Dyke, J. F. Lamiman and the author made a critical examination of the few remaining redwood timbers of the north bastion. They were just 115 years old and were completely honeycombed by the minor termite, *Kaloterms minor* (Hagen). Immature individuals, or workers, winged sexual forms, and soldiers were present in great numbers within the burrows. The wood surrounding the tunnels was still sound. This structure had resisted the attacks of all insects until possibly within the last twenty years which is a record for a neglected and weather-beaten wooden building.

The south bastion was being largely reconstructed from newly-hewn redwood timbers. The floors only were taken from the barracks. "Robbing Peter to pay Paul," has been the practice in restoration. It was all finished excepting a portion of the roof and looked so new and fresh that one was inclined to class it along with the post office, slaughter house and farm houses, as squatters on forbidden ground. The county road trespasses directly through the old enclosure. A large millstone, which shared in the reduction of the wheat to flour, invites the idle curiosity of those who hurry by in automobiles. It was brought from without the stockade by Mr. Call, who bound it together with an iron band and once offered it to the City of San Francisco as a historic relic, but the offer was refused. It now awaits a final resting place in the fort where it belongs.

The outside of the Commandant's house was modernized with a shingled roof and mill-sawed siding,⁵⁰ while the inside has been polluted and soiled by man, birds and beasts for years. One looks with remorse at the walls and ceilings shedding portions of the numerous coats of paper and paint and at the floors with the half-soles of narrow pine boards. The double fireplace alone has withstood the attacks of time with the exception of the bricks at the back which have been burnt clear through. The neatly-hewn sandstone facing and mantels are still

50. The weatherboard or siding was added prior to 1895.



RUINS OF ONE OF THE FORT ROSS BASTIONS
 (From "The Romance of Fort Ross," by Gertrude Atherton;
The Californian, Vol. V, No. 1, Dec. 1893.)

almost perfect. Kuskof, with all his supposed crudeness and peg-leg, did not live in such a place. The Commandant's house was the envy of all who visited Ross. It had carpets, a piano and glass windows and contained six rooms, a kitchen and corridor. I counted but five rooms at this time. New foundation timbers were placed under the building in 1926. The whole place is a grass and weed patch. There are still evidences of the approach from the sandy beach where the boats landed and the warehouse and ship yards were located. Across the gulch just east of the chapel is the cemetery—now a part of the sheep pasture, but fenced from the county road which is nearby. A few of the sturdy hewn redwood timbers indicate the grave which still bore a cross in 1893. Some remnants of carved pieces of wood denote the presence of another grave close by and still another is indicated by four holes where large posts once stood as markers. In all I made out the sites of six graves, the "only original colonists left at Fort Ross were those of the graveyard, the Greek crosses marking the mounds extending east and west on the parallel of latitude, as Russia buries her dead." It is reported that Kuskof, the first commandant, lies buried here, but there is no basis for this rumor. It is hoped that the state will take over the cemetery also and restore the grave ornaments as much as possible and protect the dead in this last resting place.

I have found the orchard to be a most interesting place. The old Russian fence has completely disappeared. A few bricks in the southeast portion indicate the

location of the two powder magazines which Mrs. Call stated once stood there. A number of picket fences enclose most of the original area which is also used as a sheep pasture. The orchard occupies a considerable area of the rolling hills some five hundred feet above and three-fourths of a mile behind the fort at the edge of the native shrubbery and timber. Started in 1820 by the Russians with one hundred trees of peach, apple, pear and cherry, brought from Monterey by Lieut. Kiryll Khlébnikof, it has since been added to, first by William Benitz,⁵⁰ and later by G. W. Call. It has had indifferent care, but when well cultivated yielded large crops of excellent fruit. There are now trees showing all stages of decay and in many places sprouts show where others once stood. A low spot near the road, which holds water in winter, has a heavy growth of niggerhead grass, *Juncas effusus* Linn. var. *brunneus* Engelm., which has warded off the plow for years. Below it are some of the very largest pear trees in the orchard. They appear to be of the Vicar of Wakefield variety. Some large apple trees also stand nearby. They were probably planted by Benitz. In the upper northwest corner are the original Gravenstein apple trees planted by the Russians. Only the two which were in fruit could be definitely identified. They are large, vigorous trees, covered with moss and well laden with delicious juicy fruit. Just below and bordering the road is a veritable thicket of prune seedlings which is almost impenetrable. Nearby is a huge redwood which has apparently grown up since the Russians departed. Near the middle of the orchard is a row of six seedling cherry trees 12 feet apart, also planted by the Russians. These did not look like cherry trees. Their general appearance and the size, shape and texture of the leaves much more resembled the almond. However, Mrs. Call assured me that they were a sort of small seedling cherry. Returning again to the orchard I was able to find characteristic cherry seeds in the dry grass beneath the trees. Another thicket composed of apple, cherry, pear, and prune trees and native brush occurs on either side of a small spring or creek bed near the middle of the east side. One of the four remaining pear trees planted by the Russians is on the upper side of this mass or shrubbery—the three others are some distance below the spring. Two of these pear trees are decidedly different from any other varieties in the orchard. They are tall, open trees, bearing small leaves and small, very scabby fruit. The tree above the thicket and another below, the two already referred to, are much more compact in habit. No fruit could be procured from the first, but that of the latter, although small, was much better looking than that of the other two. On October 6 the fruit of the two typical trees was ripe, while that of the latter was still green. It is possible that only the two openly-framed trees were actually planted by the Russians. The pear trees planted by Benitz are as large as those planted by the Russians, but those set out by Call are much smaller especially in trunk diameter. The three Russian Bellflower apple trees are located near and just below the spring. They are tall and slender and do not possess the wide, weeping effect of the same variety grown elsewhere in the state. The fruit at this date was small, very slender in shape and highly colored where exposed to the sun.

50. Benitz planted 1700 more trees. (The *Pacific Bee*, Sacramento, Vol. 21, p. 253, May 10, 1899.)

Summarizing, it will be noted that there remain but fifteen of the original fruit trees planted by the Russians; two Gravenstein apple and three Bellflower apple, four Russian pear and six seedling cherry trees. A census of the entire orchard at this time showed the following number of trees present: apple 54, cherry 11, pear 43, plums, several dense thickets of seedling prunes and plums, prunes 2, olives, 5. The apples are of many varieties and not a few of the trees laden with fruit of good quality, which was well colored and of fine appearance except for scab and the work of the codling moth. The pear trees are specially large—some being nearly fifty feet tall. The varieties noted were Vicar of Wakefield, Bartlett, and some very beautiful sand pears of which there are portions of two rows in the southeast corner which were planted by Call. The original trees planted by the Russians were set closely together as illustrated by the cherry trees. However, they were usually not set in rows⁵¹ as was later done in some instances by Benitz and Call.

All of the trees are brushy and covered with lichens which give them a truly aged appearance. Mrs. Call told me that the orchard had been plowed every year excepting last year, but there are certain spots which seem not to have felt the plow for many years.

The trees appear never to have been pruned and were never sprayed. At the present time scab is the most destructive pest in the orchard and the fruit of the apple and pear trees is covered and disfigured by it. Of the insects noted the codling moth⁵² is the most abundant and injurious. A large percentage of the fruit was found to be infested. The rosy and green apple aphids were also present in considerable numbers and "aphis apples" gave evidence of early spring attacks. No signs of the woolly apple aphid were seen. The oyster-shell scale, *Lepidosaphes ulmi* (Linn.), and the greedy scale, *Aspidiotus camelliae* Sign., were present on most of the apple trees but were nowhere abundant. Adults of the beneficial ladybird beetle, the margined scymnid, *Scymnus marginicollis* Mann. were also noted. Specimens of this beetle were taken by the early Russian collectors at Fort Ross and described in 1843.

The preservation of the living trees planted by the Russians should be undertaken before it is too late. The speedy acquisition by the state of the entire Fort Ross Ranch would be a great investment for the future. It is nothing less than criminal to allow the present progress of decay and despoliation to continue!

The place is entirely off the main roads of travel and is only visited by those who have it as an objective or by the few who happen upon it and who by their questioning clearly show that they had never before heard of such a place. To the coleopterists the world over, however, it is a place where beetles from an important type locality are still taken with as much enthusiasm and joy as were the shining gold nuggets from the Sierra in "the days of '49."

51. *The Pacific Bee*, Sacramento, Vol. 21, p. 253, 2 figs., May 10, 1899.

52. The orchard was reported free from codling moth in 1889. (*The Pacific Bee*, Sacramento, May 10, 1899, Vol. 21, p. 253.)

Ross was the stopping place for all of the Russians who visited the Pacific Coast of North America. Scientists, accompanying regular expeditions, or sent over by the Imperial Russian Government, were the first to make a study of the natural history of this region. In botany, zoology, and particularly in entomology, a considerable amount of work was accomplished by the collectors in California and the workers in the museums at St. Petersburg and Moscow.

One of the first Russian scientists to visit California was Dr. G. H. von Langsdorff, naturalist, who accompanied the ship *Nadezhda* commanded by Capt. A. J. von Krusenstern to Kamchatka. He sailed from Sitka on the ship *Juno* with N. P. Rezanof and arrived at San Francisco on April 5, (March 28, Langsdorff's date), 1806, and left on May 19 (May 10, Langsdorff's date), 1806.⁵³ Here Rezanof⁵⁴ secured much-needed food supplies and Langsdorff collected a number of animals and plants which were later turned into the collections at the museum at St. Petersburg. No insects were mentioned in his travels.

Otto von Kotzebue⁵⁵ of the Russian Imperial Navy made two voyages around the world and visited California on both. On the first voyage in the ship *Rurik*⁵⁶ he brought with him as naturalists, Adelbert von Chamisso, and the entomologist and zoologist, Johann Friedrich Eschscholtz, whose names are perpetuated for all time in the natural-history lore of California. Eschscholtz, a doctor of medicine, was also the ship's physician. L. Choris, the artist for the expedition, and who has furnished pictures of early life at San Francisco and has written concerning the same, was also a member of the party. They arrived in San Francisco Bay on October 1, 1816, and remained exactly one month. October was a most unfavorable season to collect either botanical or entomological specimens in the small area accessible to them. Of this Chamisso remarks "the hills and downs about the Presidio were the narrow field open to the researches of Chamisso and Eschscholtz." He had apparently discussed the matter with the Spanish settlers, for he further stated that "in the spring, when winter has afforded the earth some moisture, the hills and valleys are indeed adorned with brilliant iris and other flowers; but the drought soon destroys them."⁵⁷ It was during this short stay, however, that he collected the California poppy which he later named *Eschscholtzia californica* after his friend and the new land. He little thought of the honor he was bestowing upon his friend and himself in thus describing what afterwards became the state flower of the then sleeping Golden State. Eschscholtz turned all of his

53. Langsdorff, G. H. von., *Voyages and Travels in Various Parts of the World During the Years 1803-1807*, (London, 2 vols., 1813-1814). Bancroft, H. H., *History of California*, II, pp. 58-82.

54. The following popular stories refer to the visit of Rezanof and to the Russians in California: Harte, Bret, *Concepcion de Arguello* (a poem), Chatto and Windus, London, 1880, pp. 74-80; Thos. C. Russell, *San Francisco*, 1926, 16 pp.

Atherton, Gertrude, *Resánov*, (a novel), Authors and Newspapers Assoc., N. Y. and London, 1906, 320 pp., col. pls. *Natalie Ivanhoff* (a short story), *The Splendid Idle Forties*, Macmillan Co., N. Y., 1908, pp. 341-55.

The Resánov Voyage to California in 1806, San Francisco, T. C. Russell, 1926, pp. ix-xii, 104.

55. Kotzebue (1787-1846) was the son of the German popular dramatist, August Friedrich Ferdinand von Kotzebue (1761-1819).

56. Kotzebue, Lieut. Otto von, *A Voyage of Discovery into the South Sea and Bering's Straits, etc., in the Years 1815, 1816, 1817, 1818*, London, 3 vols., 1821. (Translated by H. E. Lloyd.) Mahr, A. C., *The Visit of the Rurik to San Francisco in 1816*. (See bibliography.)

57. Kotzebue, Otto von, *loc. cit.*, Vol. 3, pp. 38-39.

botanical collections over to Chamisso and was able to secure little of an entomological nature. What he did take was turned into the Imperial Museum at Moscow where it was later described by others.

On his second trip Kotzebue⁵⁸ was again accompanied by Eschscholtz as naturalist in the ship *Predpriatie* (*Pred-pri-ya-tie*, *Enterprise*). Two others, Prof. Lenz⁵⁹ and Mr. Hoffman, served in similar capacities. They entered San Francisco Bay on September 27, 1824, eight years after the visit in the ship *Rurik*. On the next day Kotzebue, Eschscholtz, and others made a trip by small boat to the Mission Santa Clara where they remained for three days. Here were purchased figs, apples, grapes, peaches, melons, and vegetables for the ship and no doubt the naturalist laid in a goodly supply of beetles. On October 3, 1824, Kotzebue, Eschscholtz, Hoffman, and a small number of Spanish attendants made a trip to Fort Ross via small boats to the Mission San Rafael and then across the valleys and hills on horseback, first to Sonoma and to Bodega Bay, thence northward along the coast. Although Kotzebue returned within a few days, Eschscholtz remained at the Russian settlement for a week. He returned by water, leaving Bodega Bay in one of the small skin boats or bidarkas manned by Aleuts and escorted by a small flotilla. In the vicinity of Point Reyes a violent storm occurred which forced the boats ashore. The journey was resumed as soon as the storm abated and the flotilla of twenty bidarkas entered through the Golden Gate, October 12, with Eschscholtz none the worse for his experiences. He made extensive insect collections at Fort Ross.

On November 18, Kotzebue, with Eschscholtz and a small party, set out in small boats to explore the San Joaquin and Sacramento rivers. After three days of travel they made little headway against strong north winds, but did ascend the Sacramento River approximately to the present site of Rio Vista. Kotzebue was enthusiastic about the country and had a keen eye to the future as is shown by his own words:

The many rivers flowing through this fruitful country will be of the greatest use to future settlers. The low ground is exactly adapted to the cultivation of rice; and the higher, from the extraordinary strength of the soil, would yield the finest wheat harvests. The vine might be cultivated here to great advantage. All along the banks of the river grapes grow wild, in as much profusion as the rankest weeds: the clusters were large; and the grapes, though small, were very sweet, and agreeably flavored. We often ate them in considerable quantities, and sustained no inconvenience from them. The Indians also ate them very voraciously.⁶⁰

They returned to San Francisco on November 23 and, after provisioning the ship, departed through the Golden Gate on November 25, 1824. Many interesting animals were encountered on the various excursions, among which were two species of skunks, one of which escaped from the sailors, an abundance of wild deer, ducks, geese, cranes, bears, wapiti or Roosevelt elk, a small rattlesnake, coyotes, salamanders, and others. Eschscholtz took nearly a hundred species of Coleoptera, all new excepting one.⁶¹

58. Kotzebue, Capt. Otto von, *A New Voyage Round the World in the Years 1823, 1824, 1825, 1826*. London, 2 vols., translated, 1830.

59. Prof. Emil Lenz, famous physicist, collected in Kamchatka and did not visit America.

60. Kotzebue, Otto von, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 143-44.

61. See Eschscholtz for an account of the animals and insects taken, *History of Entomology*, New York, Macmillan, 1931, p. 621.

In summarizing the zoological collections made during the entire voyage round the world, Eschscholtz states that of the 2400 species or kinds of animals taken, 1400 were insects.⁶² The insects were deposited in the collections of the University of Dorpat and a considerable number of beetles and a few others were described by Eschscholtz, but his early death, at the age of thirty-eight, cut short his work and left his fine collection to the mercies of his fellow entomologists.

The French navigator, Duhaut Cilly, visited Fort Ross on June 4, 1828, and the sketch of the fort made by his own hand, is the best early illustration of this historic spot. He first saw the fort from his ship, the *Heros*, on June 2, and the next day the commandant, Paul Shelekhof, supplied him with a pilot and directed him to the anchorage at Bodega Bay. Here he states he found fine fenced fields and good buildings. On June 4 he proceeded on horseback to Ross, crossing the Russian River in a small bidarka, which he likened to crossing the River Styx. He gave a graphic account of the settlement at Ross, and described the fort and enclosure. He was specially impressed with the lumbering activities of the Russians and the redwood trees, which were referred to as *Palo Colorado*. One tree is described as being 20 feet in diameter at the ground, with the main trunk 13 feet in diameter and 230 feet to the beginning of the top. He returned to Bodega Bay on June 5 and departed.⁶³

During the last few years of the Russian occupation of Ross a number of noted entomologists and collectors visited the place and added much to the insect collections in the museums at St. Petersburg, Moscow and at other cities in Russia and Europe. Among these were Ferdinand P. Wrangell,⁶⁴ Governor of Russian America; Dr. F. Fischer, a physician of the Russian American Company and a collector of insects in Alaska and at Ross; Dr. Edward L. Blaschke, also a physician of the company and an ardent collector of beetles in Sitka and California; George Tschernikh, an agriculturist and overseer of the Tschernikh (George's or Gorgy's) Ranch, five miles north of Bodega Bay, and a most industrious and successful collector of beetles in Alaska and in California; and I. G. Vosnesensky, naturalist and curator of the Zoological Museum of the Academy of Natural Sciences, St. Petersburg. The last named was the only trained entomologist, being sent out by the museum to collect insects in California. He collected extensively over the territory occupied by the Russians from Bodega Bay to Ross and also around San Francisco, at New Helvetia (Sacramento) and the area between Ross and the Upper San Francisco Bay region. With Tschernikh, on June 12, 1841, he was the first to climb Mount St. Helena, which he named for the Empress of Russia. As has been noted, the copper plate placed on the top of this mountain by him was removed years afterwards, but another commemorating the event was erected there in his honor in 1912.

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62. Kotzebue, Otto von, *A New Voyage, etc., op. cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 361-62.

63. A translation of the California portion of Auguste Bernard Duhaut-Cilly's *Voyage autour du Monde* (Paris, 1834) was printed in this *Quarterly*, Vol. VIII, Nos. 2, 3, and 4, 1929, the part relating to Bodega and Fort Ross appearing on pages 323-27 in No. 4.

64. Captain Ivan Kouprianoff succeeded Wrangell as Governor. He collected *Coleoptera* at Sitka, and many of the beetles taken by him were described and named by Mannerheim along with those collected by Eschscholtz, Fischer, Blaschke, Tschernikh, and Wrangell, in *Beitrag zur Kaefer-Fauna der Aleutischen Inseln, Der Insel Sitka und Neu-Californiens*, Bul. Moscou, T. 16, 1843, pp. 175-314 (300 species). The carabid beetle, *Bembidium kuprianovi* was named for him by Mannerheim (p. 45).

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(A vast quantity of material on the Russians in California, impossible to list here, may also be found in the form of scattered letters in manuscript collections in the Bancroft Library and in the Mexican Archives.)



A GENERAL VIEW OF THE SETTLEMENT AT FORT ROSS

RUSSIAN SEA-OTTER AND SEAL HUNTING ON THE CALIFORNIA COAST 1803-1841

ALEKSANDR BARANOV, for three decades Lord of the Pacific North, was acting as host at a gay festal board in Novo-Arkhangelsk, modern Sitka, in 1818. Before him was his honored guest and friend, Captain Vasilii Golovin. But as the former governor entertained the imperial inspector his inner thoughts were bitter. He could never completely realize his cherished dream of a Russian Pacific empire. He was an old man and had been asked to resign. The great Baranov even as he presided in the midst of high festivities was overcome by a sweeping sense of uselessness. The hilarities only probed his wounded feelings more deeply. He called for music. The singers who entered glanced at their respected master, and then in deep, lusty voices burst forth with the song of the sea hunt. The old man became young again. Before him in swift review passed Russia's dauntless seamen of the past and those yet to be. From the Aleutian chain to the island fringes of Lower California they moved, and he saw them standing guard on rocky outposts along that distant strand. He arose, and, radiant with hope and enthusiasm, he triumphantly proclaimed their new world deeds as he joined his chorists in singing his favorite air, "The Spirit of the Russian Hunters."¹

PART I.

THE RUSSIAN-BOSTON CONTRACT SYSTEM, 1803-1812

The southward advance of Russian seamen to the California coast was in the beginning a coöperative move. Baranov joined forces with his greatest rival in northern otter waters, the Anglo-American, in order to hunt in a marine area which belonged to neither. Negotiations for a commercial agreement were opened in 1803 by an experienced Boston merchant, Joseph O'Cain.² The New England captain had been among the advance guard of those Anglo-Americans who were leaving the North Pacific, just as it was beginning to be depleted by ruthless otter-killers, to hunt in southern fields. He was no doubt the first of all his countrymen to realize that the California fur trade could not be continued by the risky method of bartering. If Boston men could hunt the sea otter themselves, they could obtain more and could keep clear of populated centers watched over by law-enforcing Spaniards. However, equipment and expert otter-pursuers they did not possess.

1. Tikhmenev, P., "Historical Review of the Establishment of the Russian-American Company," Russian America, MS, Bancroft Library, I, Part 1, 254.

The correspondence upon which this article is based is greater in quantity than can be listed in full here. Consequently, for each topic only the more important documents will be cited. Also, for all documents, the originals of which have been used in Mexico, the Mexican archive reference only has been given, even though transcripts of the same or copies as made in various volumes of Bancroft's collection may be found in the Bancroft Library at the University of California.

2. Joseph O'Cain arrived in 1795 at Santa Barbara where he was left by an English vessel. He sailed in some of the San Blas supply ships. He was pilot of the *Otter* in 1796, captain of the *Betsy* in 1800, and supercargo of the *Enterprise* in 1801.

The Russians were the rulers of the only skilled otter hunters of the world. For years their Aleutian Indian vassals had been braving the elements in their little skin-covered canoes for the fur wealth of the far north. Tireless and sea-hardened, these "marine Cossacks" would remain motionless for from ten to twelve hours, either kneeling or sitting with their feet extended in front of them. The waves might dash over the light framework speeding through the water, but it mattered not to the rowers. They were clothed in the skin of the sea lion, and each one had fastened securely the lower edge of his jacket to a ring around the small opening in which he sat, so that not a drop could enter the boat. From five to fifteen bidarkas usually went forth to hunt together. The moment an otter was seen floating on the water, the alert Indians fixed their eyes upon it, and trembled "like the eager dog at the sight of game." Swiftly but very silently the canoes approached from the windward. When within shooting distance, while the man at the stern guided the boat, the nearest bowman raised his dart, and with sure aim threw his pronged bone spear with incredible accuracy. For twenty minutes or so the otter would remain submerged, his course being marked by a bladder attached to a long cord. When the animal arose to the surface for air, a ruthless hunter was on hand to finish him.³

With expert Aleutian spearmen, Captain O'Cain was certain he could hunt along the California coast. He turned to the rulers of the North Pacific for help. In October, 1803, he and Governor Baranov met in conference on the otter hunters' rendezvous at Kodiak Island, south of the Alaskan Peninsula. The captain's plan was simple. If Baranov would furnish Aleutian Indians and bidarkas, he would provide transportation with his vessel, the *O'Cain*, and would conduct an hunting expedition into the new fields. The skins which were collected would be divided equally and large profits could most certainly be realized.⁴

Baranov considered carefully before he made his decision. Many worries pressed upon him.⁵ Just the year before, the new settlement at Novo-Arkhangelsk had been wiped out by the hostile Kolosh. Hunting parties sent to the northern mainland had been set upon by other treacherous Indian tribes. Foreign encroachments were becoming more and more annoying. To climax all, one of those intruders came to tell him of the discovery of new hunting grounds. Baranov, the indomitable, recalled the secret orders which he had received from his company the year before to push settlements southward. Baranov, the dreamer, in thought linked the new proposition with his vision of a greater Russia on the Pacific Coast. O'Cain's idea might be the means of making that dream come true. He would venture. The first contract was signed.

3. For descriptions of Aleutian otter-hunting methods, see the following. Alvarado, Juan Bautista, *Historia de California*, MS, Bancroft Library, II, 9-10. Osio, Antonio María, *Historia de California*, MS, Bancroft Library, 25-27. Pattie, James Ohio, *The Personal Narrative of James O. Pattie*, Cincinnati, 1833, p. 217. Tikhmenev, "Historical Review," *Russian America*, I, Part 1, 135, 137-38; II, 263-64. Golovin, Vasilii, "Review of the Russian Colonies in North America," *ibid.*, III, Part 2, 139-40. Khlebnikov, Kiril, "Letters on America," *ibid.*, III, Part 3, 71-72. Golovin, Vasilii, "Extracts from a Voyage around the World," *ibid.*, III, Part 4, 70-71, 155-56. Vallejo, Salvador, "Notas Históricas sobre California," MS, Bancroft Library, 36-37.

4. Tikhmenev, "Historical Review," *Russian America*, II, 835. Khlebnikov, "Letters," *ibid.*, III, Part 3, 12.

5. Bancroft, Hubert Howe, *History of Alaska*, Chapter 19.

Preparations for the California hunting experiment occupied old and young during the next few weeks. Aleutian women made waterproofs for their husbands. Old men contentedly whittled away at canoe paddles and frames. Small Indian boys helped their fathers by cutting sticks and beams, or by smearing whale oil in chinks and seams of the completed bidarkas. Russian-American Company agents collected provisions palatable to northern hunters—*youkala* or dried fish, whale meat, and whale oil. Hooks and lines were supplied for catching fish to supplement food stores. At last twenty bidarkas and twice as many hunters under the command of an able Russian, Shvetsov, were ready. As pledge of good faith, O'Cain left behind 12,000 rubles of merchandise.⁶

The *O'Cain* arrived opposite San Diego early in December, 1803. It did not venture within the harbor. Three men came in a small boat as far as Punta de Guijarros to ask for supplies, but were refused. After four days the vessel continued southward to San Quintín on the Lower California coast. *Comandante* José Manuel Ruíz arrived post haste from Mission Santo Domingo. Captain O'Cain then began to resort to the usual subterfuges practiced by Yankees in attempting to circumvent Spanish law enforcement. He told how he had not been on land for eleven months and how a terrible storm in the northwest had damaged his vessel. He must have help. Convinced by O'Cain's good story telling and by a trip aboard the ship that the "necessity was real," Ruíz permitted the Boston ship to remain in port for a few days.

The few days lengthened into three months while the *O'Cain* stayed on in the calm waters of San Quintín. On March 4, 1804, Governor José Arrillaga reported to the viceroy that "... there is not an otter left from Mission Rosario to Santo Domingo." He had given repeated orders to O'Cain, but excuses had been the only reply. The Spanish governor continued, "There is no other way to prevent them except to tell them not to hunt and to this they pay no attention."⁷ It was impossible to seize any of the skins as five cannons were trained on the spot where they were piled up on the beach. Furthermore, some of the forty Aleuts were always stationed close at hand. In the latter part of March, O'Cain completed his hunt. On the return voyage, near present-day Ensenada, he was refused wood and water. Arrived at Kodiak in June, he turned over to Baranov the half of 1,100 furs. In addition, O'Cain had 700 skins which he had managed to purchase on his own account from Spanish officials and missionaries.⁸

The contract system proved satisfactory to both parties. The problem of obtaining furs along the California coast seemed to be solved for the Boston men. Baranov, likewise, wished to continue the plan, for financially the *O'Cain's* voy-

6. Khlebnikov, "Letters," Russian America, III, Part 3, 12-13. Khlebnikov, Kiril, "Biography of Alexander Baranov," *ibid.*, IV, Part 4, 65-66.

For a description of the outfitting of an otter-hunting expedition see Tikhmenev, "Historical Review," *ibid.*, II, Part 1, 259-61.

7. José Joaquín de Arrillaga to José de Iturrigaray, Loreto, March 2, 1804, *Californias*, MS, *Archivo General*, Mexico, L, No. 8.

8. Some accounts of the *O'Cain* in 1803 are as follows. Arrillaga to Manuel Rodríguez, Loreto, January 12, 1804, Provincial Records, MS, Bancroft Library, XII, 27-30. José Manuel Ruíz to Arrillaga, San Vicente, February 10, 1804, *Californias*, L, No. 8. Arrillaga to Iturrigaray, Loreto, July 10, 1804, *ibid.*, L, No. 8. Khlebnikov, "Letters," Russian America, III, Part 3, 13. Khlebnikov, "Biography of Baranov," *ibid.*, IV, Part 4, 66.

age had been satisfactory. Furthermore, the decreasing number of otters and continued intrusion of foreigners into northern waters strengthened his conviction, which was further confirmed and revitalized by Nikolai Rezanov, that two steps would have to be taken immediately in Russian America.⁹ Hunting grounds must be extended and the Anglo-American must be prevented from taking away the fur wealth of both the old and new fields. Baranov saw that the contract system was the means of accomplishing these ends.

Jonathan Winship, who arrived from Boston on the *O'Cain* in 1806, made the second contract with Baranov. The *O'Cain* was well equipped for its California voyage. Over a hundred veteran Kodiak otter-hunters, commanded by the Russian, Slobodchikov, and fifty bidarkas were on board. In addition there were twelve Indian women destined to toil away for hunting gangs on distant rocky islands. Provisions included the staples of a northern diet—15,400 *youkala*, 1,000 pounds of whale meat, and a large quantity of the much-liked beverage, whale oil. Muskets and flints were given to each of the hunters.¹⁰

Winship did everything possible on this trip to avoid trouble with the Spaniards. After trading and hunting in Trinidad Bay, north of Humboldt Bay, he sailed directly to the Lower California coast in June, 1806. Here, by leaving his one-hundred men upon various islands and by keeping the *O'Cain* in the mainland ports of Todos Santos and San Quintín removed from the actual hunting scenes, he created a situation impossible for the authorities to handle. From June to August otters and seal skins worth \$60,000 in the Canton market had been taken by Winship's hunters.¹¹

O'Cain, likewise, had made a contract with Baranov in the spring of 1806. His vessel, the *Eclipse*, was cruising along the Californias at the same time as the *O'Cain*. Again Captain *O'Cain* experienced Spanish opposition. The *Eclipse* anchored just beyond range of the famous cannon at San Diego on June 25. Although a piteous tale was told of an immediate need for repairs and supplies, Manuel Rodríguez, alert port commander, as usual refused all requests. The vessel left, but Rodríguez dispatched Corporal Juan Osuna with four soldiers to the bay of Todos Santos. There the bold Boston captain and fifteen armed sailors celebrated July 4th by capturing the Spaniard and two of his soldiers. Osuna, who was soon released, stated that the crew of the Boston vessel always carried guns. The captain was ever watchful, for each morning, noon, and evening a sailor would climb the mast and closely scan the seas. The *Eclipse* stayed on for a few weeks more. Five of the crew who went ashore to get supplies were seized when their longboat was dashed to pieces upon making a landing in the roadstead

9. Captain Lütke stated that one of Baranov's chief purposes was to extend hunting activities to new fields because of the decreasing number of otters in the north, and he added, "Of some assistance in this pursuit were the California sea otters." Lütke, Captain, "Extracts from the writings of Captain Lütke," *ibid.*, III, Part 4, 164.

10. "Solid Men of Boston in the Northwest," MS, Bancroft Library, 4, 15. This is an anonymous manuscript written by someone who used the Winship records. Tikhmenev, "Historical Review," *Russian America*, I, Part 1, 184. Khlebnikov, "Letters," *ibid.*, III, Part 3, 13, 203-4. Khlebnikov, "Biography of Baranov," *ibid.*, IV, Part 4, 94.

11. "Solid Men of Boston," 19.

of Mission San José del Cabo. O'Cain had much to relate to the Russian governor when he returned to Novo-Arkhangelsk in August.¹²

Three Boston vessels under Russian contracts were along the California coast in 1807. Captain Swift of the *Derby* obtained twenty-five bidarkas and fifty natives under the same terms as those given to Winship.¹³ Oliver Kimball, brother-in-law of O'Cain, concluded an agreement in October, 1806. His vessel, the *Peacock*, sailed with twelve bidarkas and some Aleuts under the command of the Russian, Vasili Petrovich Tarakanov, who had carefully viewed California otter fields with Shvetsov on the *O'Cain's* voyage in 1803. For several reasons Kimball in 1807 steered clear of California ports. He could profit by the knowledge of Tarakanov. The captain himself had learned his lesson the year before while attempting to obtain skins entirely by the use of the barter system. Finally, before starting, he was expressly warned by Baranov not to go "too near the Spanish settlements."

The harbor of Bodega was chosen as the hiding place of the *Peacock* from February to May. Five years before the establishment of Fort Ross, Russians knew the value of this port as a base sufficiently removed from Spanish centers. Temporary houses were quickly erected on the beach. Canoes were sent up and down the coast and even into San Francisco Bay. Here a great hunt was in store for them, since only the year before, "the precious sea-otter . . . almost unheeded, was swimming about the bay in numbers."¹⁴ As the Indians slipped in they hugged the coast farthest away from presidial cannon. About the middle of March when five bidarkas were leaving, a shot from the fort caused the Indians hastily to abandon two of them. Leaving Bodega in May, Kimball apparently made a quick voyage to Lower California. In June, 1807, he was in the vicinity of San Quintín. In August the *Peacock* brought back to Novo-Arkhangelsk 753 prime otter skins, 258 yearlings, and 250 cubs.¹⁵

After taking his fur cargo to the Russian North in August, 1806, Winship returned in the *O'Cain* early in 1807 with additional canoes and fifty more Indians. At the Farallones the exciting discovery was made of "a vast number of fur and hair seals." The vessel then sailed on to Catalina. Around that and near-by islands Aleuts pursued the sea otter. Arriving off Lower California in March, the *O'Cain* cruised from island to island, leaving new hunters to join the gangs which had been at work since the previous year. An account of the 1807 voyage states that "The *O'Cain* had now from seventy to eighty canoes, carrying about a hundred and fifty Kodiak Indian hunters, fitted out and hunting sea otter among the Islands of Guadalupe, Natividad, Cedros and Redondo, while other gangs were

12. Accounts of the *Eclipse* in 1806 are as follows. Rodríguez to Arrillaga, San Diego, June 23, 1806, Provincial State Papers, MS, Bancroft Library, XIX, 136-38. Rodríguez to Arrillaga, San Diego, July 5, 1806, *Californias*, LXII. Ruiz to Rodríguez, San Vicente, July 12, 1806, *ibid.*, LXII. Rodríguez to Arrillaga, San Diego, July 25, 1806, *ibid.*, LXII.

13. Tikhmenev, "Historical Review," Russian America, I, Part 1, 188.

14. Langsdorff, Georg Heinrich, *Langsdorff's Narrative of the Resanov Voyage*, San Francisco, 1927, p. 81.

15. References for the 1807 voyage of the *Peacock* follow. Luis Argüello to Arrillaga, San Francisco, March 31, 1807, *Californias*, LI, No. 12. Argüello to Arrillaga, San Francisco, May 15, 1807, *ibid.*, LI, No. 12. José Ignacio Arce to Ruiz, Santo Domingo, June 2, 1807, *ibid.*, LXII. Tikhmenev, "Historical Review," Russian America, II, Part 1, 844. Khlebnikov, "Letters," *ibid.*, III, Part 3, 14.

stationed on some of the islands to take fur seal."¹⁶ Russian references mention a quarrel between Winship and Slobodchikov. No doubt there was a conflict of authority. The angry Russian purchased for 150 otter skins a small schooner, naming it the *Nikolai*, loaded it with furs, and sailed in 1807 for the Sandwich Islands. Here some of the skins were exchanged for provisions for the Russian-American Company.¹⁷

Boston-Aleutian activities on the island retreats along Upper and Lower California were not unobserved by Spanish officials. Governor Arrillaga was informed in February, 1807, of the canoes lurking about near Santa Barbara, and immediately ordered the commander at San Francisco to be on the lookout for the vessel and to inform him as soon as it was seen. A few days later when the *O'Cain* was sighted off the coast between Los Angeles and Santa Barbara, four soldiers were sent to watch its movements. In March Indian fishers of Mission Santo Domingo reported having seen three large vessels at sea and men in a canoe hunting at night. These three ships were undoubtedly the *O'Cain*, *Peacock*, and *Mercury*. José Ignacio Arce the next day led some soldiers to San Quintín. Here it was learned that bidarkas had just left and that the Indian rowers had killed four cows. Not satisfied, Arce went farther south to Mission Rosario. In a small bay he found ten hunters who succeeded in communicating the name of their vessel—the *O'Cain*. The Spanish soldier changed his mind about capturing them when he observed that they were all well armed. All he could do was to order them to leave the coast, and instruct a soldier to watch them. They had promised to row back to the island opposite, there to await the larger vessel.¹⁸

Winship's hunters continued to worry the Spaniards until June, 1807. Indian gangs were finally collected in April, and according to the ship's journal the return voyage was begun. But it took two months to sail from Cedros Island to the northern limits of Lower California. In May a ship, reported as the *Litayre* commanded by "Juan Quinship" arrived opposite Santo Domingo supposedly to repair tattered rigging. A month later the vessel was still there and hunters were reported at San Quintín.¹⁹ In a clash at that place one Indian was killed and others were captured. The *O'Cain* finally beat its way northward, while Kodiak Indians delightfully entertained with "exhibitions of their national dances and singing of the songs of their country."²⁰ In September when the vessel arrived at Novo-Arkhangelsk, the total result of the hunt was found to be 3,006 prime otter skins, 1,264 yearlings, and 549 cubs.²¹

The Russian-Boston otter trade in California was quiescent from 1808 to 1810 while the Winships were voyaging homeward via China and making the return trip. Only one Boston merchant pursued business under the contract plan during

16. "Solid Men of Boston," 21-22.

17. Tikhmenev, "Historical Review," Russian America, I, Part 1, 185. Khlebnikov, "Letters," *ibid.*, III, Part 3, 14, 203-4. Khlebnikov, "Biography of Baranov," *ibid.*, IV, Part 4, 94-95.

18. Arrillaga to Argüello, Santa Barbara, February 14, 1807, Provincial Records, XII, 269. Arrillaga to Iturrigaray, Santa Barbara, February 28, 1807, *Californias*, LXII. Arce to Ruiz, Santo Domingo, March 20, 1807, *ibid.*, LXII.

19. Arce to Ruiz, Santo Domingo, May 4, 1807, *ibid.*, LXII. Arce to Ruiz, Santo Domingo, June 2, 1807, *ibid.*, LXII.

20. "Solid Men of Boston," 24.

21. Khlebnikov, "Letters," Russian America, III, Part 3, 14.

those years—Captain George Eayrs of the *Mercury* who was undoubtedly the most daring and enterprising of all the Anglo-American otter traders. Captain Eayrs had bartered for skins along the coast in 1806 and 1807 before entering into contract engagements. In May, 1808, he and Baranov made final arrangements for the treatment and payment of the Aleuts, who with twenty-five bidarkas, all under the command of Shvetsov, were placed aboard the *Mercury*. After touching at Trinidad and Bodega, the vessel with its canoes hovering close about remained during the month of December at safe distances from the coast between San Francisco and Monterey. All movements were closely watched by the Spaniards. In April, 1809, the *Mercury* was hunting with twenty-four canoes opposite San Juan Capistrano. The next month Eayrs received a very direct letter from Sergeant Javier Alvarado of Los Angeles, "I ask that as soon as you see this you retire from this coast with your frigate and people who accompany you."²² Eayrs obeyed shortly afterwards but not before obtaining a cargo of 2,080 skins.²³ The captain made a second otter-hunting contract in the fall of 1809. His chief purpose, however, was to trade covertly for supplies for the Russians. As a side issue, otter skins were obtained both by hunting and bartering. After Eayrs returned to Novo-Arkhangelsk in June, 1810, he gave up the contract method and became a thorough-going smuggler for several years until his vessel was captured.²⁴

A new Russian-Boston intrusion into Spanish otter fields occurred in the years 1810, 1811, and 1812. The *O'Cain*, sent back by the Winships under Captain Jonathan Winship, arrived first in the North Pacific to equip for a southern cruise. In December, 1809, Baranov agreed to furnish fifty bidarkas and the necessary Indians.²⁵ The next summer Captain William Davis of the *Isabella* obtained forty-eight bidarkas and Indians under the command of the experienced Tarakanov.²⁶ Lastly, in the fall Captain Nathan Winship of the *Albatross* negotiated with Baranov for some sixty canoes.²⁷ Thus, three Boston vessels from out of the Russian North and under contracts were assembled on the Spanish coast in the latter part of 1810.

Hunting activities became bolder in 1810. The *O'Cain* until the fall of the year cruised along the Lower California coast. The *Isabella* made Bodega its base during September and October. But while the American crew passed the time comfortably in three huts on the beach, Aleutian Indians were doing the daring work. The coast between Bodega and San Francisco was the field of the first hunt. Then canoes entered the Golden Gate. In the middle of September over twenty

22. Francisco Javier Alvarado to George Eayrs, Los Angeles, May 14, 1809, Mercury Case Documents, MS, Los Angeles Public Library.

23. Accounts of the *Mercury* in 1808-1809 are as follows. Arrillaga to Pedro de Garibay, Monterey, December 30, 1808, *Californias*, LXII. Khlebnikov, "Letters," Russian America, III, Part 3, 14-15. Khlebnikov, "Biography of Baranov," *ibid.*, IV, Part 4, 106-8.

24. References to the 1809-1810 voyage of the *Mercury* follow. Notes of goods and skins, November and December, 1809, Mercury Case Documents. Declaration of captured sailors, January 16, 1810, *Provincias Internas*, MS, *Archivo General*, Mexico, XIX, No. 3. Declaration of Julian Pedro, January 18, 1814, Mercury Case Documents.

25. Khlebnikov, "Letters," Russian America, III, Part 3, 15. Khlebnikov, "Biography of Baranov," *ibid.*, IV, Part 4, 129.

26. Khlebnikov, "Biography of Baranov," *ibid.*, IV, Part 4, 129. John Ebbets to John Jacob Astor, Macao, January 11, 1811, Astor Papers, MS, Baker Library, Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration.

27. "Solid Men of Boston," 40-48, 52. Khlebnikov, "Letters," Russian America, III, Part 3, 15. Khlebnikov, "Biography of Baranov," *ibid.*, IV, Part 4, 129.

bidarkas were seen going from San Mateo toward the estuaries of San José. A few days later three Russian otter hunters were seized in those same estuaries. On September 24 seven Aleuts were imprisoned in the presidio and were still there the last of December. In late September when Alférez Gabriel Moraga journeyed to Bodega, two Aleuts came to meet him, claiming that soldiers had killed nine of their companions who had been hunting in San Francisco Bay. Early in October five other Russian hunters were captured there.²⁸

All three of the contract vessels as also the *Mercury* were harbored in Drake's Bay the last of November, 1810. Just before the *Albatross* arrived on the 29th the canoes of the *Isabella* and *O'Cain* were worrying the Spaniards. Mission Indians had reported the presence of two large vessels. Lieutenant José María Estudillo told of seeing thirteen canoes between the estuaries of San Mateo and San Bruno, and an Indian informed him that on that same morning twenty bidarkas had left the small island off Point San Mateo. On the afternoon of the 25th two lads who were fishing near San Francisco found a note on the end of a stick which was thrust into the sand. It was from a certain "Guillermo," no doubt William Davis of the *Isabella*, and was addressed to Luis Argüello. That was the Boston man's method of meeting the Spaniard. "Guillermo" begged the *comandante* to return to him "the poor Indians" which he held at the presidio, because they had entered the bay "without his knowledge."²⁹

The Boston account based upon the journal of the *Albatross* describes the general movements of all three vessels while they were engaged in seal and otter hunting in 1810 and 1811.³⁰

Dec. 4th, the ship being off the Farallones, they communicated with the party on the island and found they had obtained 30,000 fur seal skins since they had been left there, five months since. The gang was increased by six Sandwich Islanders, and the ship bore away for St. Louis Obispo, to wood and water and procure beef of the Spaniards. A party of hunters, with their canoes and women, were left at the Island of Santa Barbara to take otter. During the three days they were left here the hunters took about sixty prime sea otter skins. The ship then proceeded to St. Quintin, where she again joined the *O'Cain*. The hunters of this ship during her absence, had taken 1,600 sea otter skins and were still doing well. It seems that the two captains Winship pursued their business of hunting and trading on joint account, in different directions, and with gangs on various islands, the ships moving between the points of observation, supplying their wants and collecting the proceeds of the parties. Many furs were also obtained from the Spanish Missions in Lower California.

In the spring the three Boston vessels shifted hunting activities to the north. The *Albatross* was first to leave the Lower California coast on April 1, 1811. Proceeding directly to the Farallones, the Boston men found that the party left there had taken about 4,000 seals. After taking aboard the furs and supplying the men on the island, they sailed to Drake's Bay. A few days later, on May 11, the *Albatross* was joined by the *O'Cain* and *Isabella*.³¹

28. Difficulties between Aleuts and Spaniards in the latter part of 1810 are mentioned in the following. Argüello to Arrillaga, San Francisco, September 19, 1810, Provincial State Papers, XIX, 275. Argüello to Arrillaga, San Francisco, September 20, 1810, *ibid.*, XIX, 275-76. Moraga, Gabriel, "Diario de su Expedición al Puerto de Bodega," San Francisco, October 3, 1810, *ibid.*, XIX, 276. Arrillaga to Francisco Javier de Venegas, Monterey, October 20, 1810, Provincial Records, IX, 125.

29. Argüello to Arrillaga, San Francisco, November 26, 1810, Provincial State Papers, XIX, 280-81.

30. "Solid Men of Boston," 53.

31. *Ibid.*, 54.

For one month Drake's Bay was used again as the base of activities for the three vessels. Canoes took provisions to the sealers stationed on the Farallones and brought back furs. Not an otter had a chance along the coast from Bodega to Point Pillar south of San Francisco. Besides the Aleutian hunters of the Boston men were those from the Russian vessel, *Chirikov*, anchored at Bodega and under the command of Ivan Kuskov. On May 30 Indian neophytes reported to Argüello that there were 130 canoes between Bodega and San Francisco. Also bidarkas were seen near the vicinity of Points San Pedro and Pillar. The *comandante* immediately sent troops from the presidio with orders to march along the coast and, "if there were such canoes, to surprise them because just at nightfall they would come to land on those beaches."³² However, the men returned after a few days, not having seen any sign of canoes. Once again bidarkas slipped into and around the edges of San Francisco Bay. When Kuskov's hunters entered in May, sixty bidarkas from the *Albatross* and forty-eight from the *Isabella* were operating in the harbor.³³ Indians belonging to the *Isabella* encountered the Spaniards face to face. Davis, according to Antonio María Osio, offered 3,000 *pesos* to Argüello for permission to bring his hunters into San Francisco Bay. The Spaniard emphatically refused. Thereupon, Davis ordered all his canoes inside. In spite of the shots fired from the presidio to frighten them, the canoes kept on. Osio continues the story.³⁴

When it was known that the canoes were always constructed of sea lion skins and that they had to be taken from the water to be dried and smeared with oil, a soldier was put on guard. At the end of a few days, he came with the communication that at twilight in one of the most sheltered coves below the hill of San Bruno, the hunters had landed with some canoes.

Upon the continuation of the communication, Alférez Don José Sánchez later left with twenty men, who, after having approximated where the Kodiaks were, landed, and, without being heard and in spite of the watchfulness of the Indians, went hunting for them above the wall of the cove. When they were within gunshot, and although the night was dark, all fired at the most visible objects. This resulted in killing two Kodiaks and it was not known how many fled wounded, because at the moment they embarked and returned from the shore, leaving two canoes on land because of the load of skins which they had and which one man alone could not move upon the water.

In June, 1811, the *Albatross* picked up the various parties of otter hunters and sealers scattered from Lower California to the Farallones. When all three vessels returned to the north in the late summer of 1811, Baranov expressed high satisfaction at the number of skins obtained—about 4,700 in all for the company's share.³⁵ However, in a letter to John Jacob Astor he added the significant statement that the Boston men "did not return without a small loss of men."³⁶

While the three Boston ships were sailing across to the Canton market in 1812, others likewise under contracts entered Spanish seas. Baranov made two arrangements for California hunting voyages the latter part of 1811, one with William Blanchard of the *Catherine* who was given fifty bidarkas, and another with

32. Argüello to Arrillaga, San Francisco, May 30, 1811, Provincial State Papers, XIX, 307-8.

33. Khlebnikov, "Letters," Russian America, III, Part 3, 17, 205.

34. Osio, *Historia de California*, 14-15, 24-25.

35. Khlebnikov, "Letters," Russian America, III, Part 3, 15. Khlebnikov, "Biography of Baranov," *ibid.*, IV, Part 4, 129.

36. Aleksandr Baranov to Astor, Novo-Arkhangelsk, August 13/15, 1811, Astor Papers.

Thomas Meek of the *Amethyst* who received fifty two canoes. From June to August, 1812, both vessels were hunting along the Lower California coast.³⁷ In 1812 the *Charon*, also under a contract, and commanded by Captain Whitmore, left a sealing party at the Farallone Islands and then cruised along the coast to San Quintín.³⁸ Each of the above captains shared with the Russians from 1,400 to 1,800 skins.³⁹

Both Boston man and Russian had profited from the contract system of trade. The Anglomán, in the face of Spanish law enforcement and due to his own lack of hunting equipment, could not have remained at that time in the California otter fields. The Aleut made it possible for him to establish a line of hunting bases, all removed from Spanish population centers. Bodega Bay, Drake's Bay, the Farallone Islands, the Santa Barbara Channel Islands, the bay of San Quintín, Todos Santos Island, and Cedros Island were such points where seals were killed or from which the coast was scoured in all directions for the otter. The Boston vessels were safe, always aiming to keep plenty of sea room. The Aleutian Indian, the tool of the Anglomán, paid the penalty by seizure, searching examination, imprisonment, and life itself.

For the Russians the contract system was the means of hunting along the California coast at a time when they lacked transportation and when the finding of new otter grounds was of utmost importance. Furthermore, considering the Russian desire to keep the fur wealth of the Pacific from the Anglo American, it was undoubtedly a means of preventing their rival from having the exclusive run of the new fields.

PART II.

INDEPENDENT RUSSIAN OTTER-HUNTING AND SEALING, 1809-1823

From the Russian viewpoint the contract system was only a means to an end—that of engaging in otter hunting in California upon an independent basis. This end in turn was but a part of Russia's general policy in the North Pacific, for from the days of Rezanov to the promulgation of the ukase of 1821 the expulsion of the foreigner from Pacific fur fields was a primary objective.⁴⁰

Baranov planned early for independent otter-hunting in California. He determined "not to divide the profits of this business with anybody"⁴¹ and "waited only

37. Testimonies of John Dillaway and Pedro, San Blas, January 16, 1814, Mercury Case Documents, Khlebnikov, "Letters," Russian America, III, Part 3, 15. Khlebnikov, "Biography of Baranov," *ibid.*, IV, Part 4, 129.

38. Testimony of Dillaway, Santa Barbara, June 19, 1811, Mercury Case Documents, Khlebnikov, "Biography of Baranov," Russian America, IV, Part 4, 129.

39. Khlebnikov, "Letters," *ibid.*, III, Part 3, 15. Khlebnikov, "Biography of Baranov," *ibid.*, IV, Part 4, 129.

40. All of Rezanov's correspondence reflects his concern about the intruding Boston merchants. His California expedition was not only to meet an immediate emergency, but was to open up a new source of supplies. Rezanov, Nikolai Petrovich, *The Rezanov Voyage to Nueva California in 1806*, San Francisco, 1926, pp. 59, 72. Arrillaga to Iturrigaray, San Francisco, May 28, 1806, Provincial Records, IX, 75-76.

Russian ministers from 1809 to 1812 sought action from the president of the United States in regard to foreign encroachers. Arrangements made with John Jacob Astor in those same years were also for the purpose of eliminating adventurers. Porter, Kenneth, *John Jacob Astor*, Cambridge, 1911, I, 171-72, 180. Correspondence pertaining to the subject may be found at the end of the above work.

Orders from St. Petersburg were directed against company transactions with foreigners on the Northwest Coast because of the increasing competition in oriental fur markets. Bauroff, *Alaska*, 481. Tikhmenev, "Historical Review," Russian America, I, Part 1, 190.

41. Lütke, "Extracts," *ibid.*, III, Part 4, 164.



THE GREEK CHAPEL AT FORT ROSS
(From "The Romance of Fort Ross," by Gertrude Atherton;
The Californian, Vol. V, No. 1, Dec, 1893.)

for a chance to go there in person on some sea otter expedition.⁴² Looking to the future, the governor had given specific instructions in 1803 to Shvetsov and in 1806 to Slobodchikov, Russian commanders of the Aleuts sent on the *O'Cain*, to make detailed observations of the quantities and habitats of valuable marine animals.⁴³ Further information concerning the wisdom of engaging in the California otter trade was obtained as a result of the Rezanov expedition. Georg Heinrich von Langsdorff was of the opinion that "a very advantageous trade might be established" in otter skins, although it was "very questionable if the Spaniards would consent to such trade."⁴⁴

42. Khlebnikov, "Letters," *ibid.*, III, Part 3, 16.

43. Khlebnikov in his analysis of the reasons for giving such instructions to Shvetsov indicates how Baranov was using the contract system to accomplish his larger program. "He wanted to get acquainted with the inhabitants of California . . . and, above all, he wanted to discover how far the influence of the Americans extended over the Californians and the savages on other portions of the Northwest Coast of America." Khlebnikov, "Biography of Baranov," *ibid.*, IV, Part 4, 64-65.

44. Langsdorff, *Langsdorff's Narrative*, 88.

The first independent hunting expedition to California arrived in 1809. Kuskov, Baranov's trusty "co-laborer," was in command. Two vessels started from Novo-Arkhangelsk in October, 1808, but one was ship-wrecked near the Columbia. The *Kodiak*, Captain Petrov, touched at Trinidad to look for sea otters, but finding none, sailed on to Bodega Bay. Temporary buildings were erected. According to the Spanish record, 150 Indians, including twenty women, and forty Russians came on the vessel.

A new and safer approach was found to the rich otter field of San Francisco Bay. Marin Peninsula became a portage. Landing at Point Bonita on the Pacific side, the Aleuts shouldered their canoes and tramped across the country to the bay. In February, 1809, about fifty canoes were seen landing at the northern end of the harbor in order to make the portage west.⁴⁵ As soon as the forbidden waters were entered troubles began. Early in February skin craft were moving around Angel Island. One Aleut who landed was seized by San Francisco neophytes and brought to the presidio. Bidarkas were skulking around the southern shores of the bay during the last of March. On the 26th twenty canoes came ashore and seventeen men landed. A Spanish sergeant and eight soldiers hurried to the spot. Firing occurred, and as the hunters fled four were killed and two wounded. Careful treatment was given the latter, but the troops were ordered to be in readiness in case the crew of the large Russian vessel should attempt to take any means of revenge. In April canoes were still in the bay near Yerba Buena. The *Kodiak* did not leave Bodega until August, when it took back to Baranov over 2,000 skins.

A second otter expedition was supervised by Kuskov in 1811. The hunters who had been brought on the *Chirikov* found very few skins along the coast near Bodega. Consequently, in May, while Kuskov was making observations in connection with the future settlement, twenty-two bidarkas were sent to San Francisco. These canoes with those of the three Boston contract vessels which were then anchored at Drake's Bay made a total of about 140 canoes hunting in the port at one time. Spanish officials employed a most effective method of handling the situation. Sentries were stationed at all wells and springs where the Aleuts obtained water. As a result, "the party was compelled to go away."⁴⁶ Aleuts were sent to the Farallones for a supply of sea-lion meat, and then the *Chirikov* sailed for the north in June with the skins of 1,160 otters and seventy-eight yearlings.⁴⁷

The next step in the Russian advance into California otter fields was the establishment of a hunting base. Dependence upon foreign vessels had become undesirable and unnecessary. Hunting in or south of San Francisco Bay was both impossible and unpolitic. In the first place, Spanish tactics had put a stop to activities in the bay. Furthermore, the desire of the Russians for some commercial arrange-

45. Argüello to Arrillaga, San Francisco, February 16, 1809, Provincial State Papers, XIX, 266-67. Other Spanish records of the voyage of the *Kodiak* are as follows. Arrillaga to Argüello, Monterey, February 9, 1809, Provincial Records, XII, 286. Arrillaga to Argüello, Monterey, March 29, 1809, *ibid.*, XII, 287. Arrillaga to Argüello, Monterey, April 5, 1809, *ibid.*, XII, 287.

Russian references follow. Tikhmenev, "Historical Review," Russian America, I, Part 1, 200-02. Khlebnikov "Letters," *ibid.*, III, Part 3, 16, 204. Khlebnikov, "Biography of Baranov," *ibid.*, IV, Part 4, 110-11.

46. Khlebnikov, "Letters," *ibid.*, III, Part 3, 205.

47. Khlebnikov, "Letters," *ibid.*, III, Part 3, 17, 204-5. Baranov to Astor, Novo-Arkhangelsk, August 13/25, 1811, in Porter, *Astor*, I, 470-73.

ment with Spanish Californians caused them to consider it best to avoid all occasion for offense.⁴⁸ As the historian Kiril Khlebnikov explains, "At the harbor of San Francisco the Spaniards kept strict watch and allowed no hunters to enter and in order to retain their friendship we had to abstain from all attempts to visit that place for the purpose of hunting."⁴⁹ Pursuing the otter north of the Spanish settlements from a permanent California base was the only form of independent hunting which could continue. Fort Ross and her southern outpost, the Farallone Islands, served as the needed bases.

Fort Ross, therefore, was a center for sea-otter hunting as well as for supplies.⁵⁰ Shortly after the construction of the new establishment was begun in the spring of 1812, Kuskov sent out Aleuts in the forty bidarkas brought on the *Chirikov*. Whenever Indians could be spared they left on hunting expeditions going up the coast as far as Cape Mendocino but rarely farther south than Drake's Bay.⁵¹ Apparently a few skins were obtained by bartering with California natives because a soldier who was on the Moraga expedition of 1812 later testified that after the founding of the Russian settlement the Indians no longer brought their skins to the presidio.⁵² Also, there is little doubt that hunting was carried on in San Francisco Bay in 1813 and 1814 when canoes were allowed to enter for supplies. Khlebnikov states that whenever the Russians came to trade they always took Aleutian Indians and sometimes secured a few skins.⁵³ In 1813 four Aleuts were detained, according to Kuskov "without the least cause" at the presidio.⁵⁴ Otter hunters and sealers from Fort Ross must have been kept busy for the first two years, or otherwise William J. Pigot, captain of the *Forester*, one of Astor's vessels, could not have purchased 3,400 skins from Kuskov in March, 1814.⁵⁵

The Farallone Islands became a permanent base for Russian sea-lion hunters and sealers in the same year that Fort Ross was established.⁵⁶ For two decades Baranov's seamen held this southernmost outpost of Russia's Pacific empire. From six to thirty Aleuts and several Russians continuously occupied those lonely rocks. Five or six times a year bidarkas would fight their way through the open sea from Bodega Bay to bring food, wood, water, and kegs for sea-lion meat and oil. Once a year or so one of the large company boats would stop to land a new

48. All Russian accounts of the establishment of Fort Ross mention the strictness of Spanish law-enforcement in San Francisco Bay and the effect it had upon Russian otter-hunting.

49. Khlebnikov, "Letters," Russian America, III, Part 3, 207.

50. Some Russian writers place otter hunting as first among the purposes of the Ross settlement. Captain Lütke stated that "The hope of extending the sea-otter business was the principle motive for the foundation of a factory in California." Lütke, "Extracts," *ibid.*, III, Part 4, 165. Concerning Kuskov, Captain Golovin wrote, "With all the above-mentioned enterprises he does not lose sight of his principle business—to send off parties to hunt sea-otters." Golovin, "Extracts," *ibid.*, III, Part 4, 84.

51. Tikhmenev, "Historical Review," *ibid.*, I, Part 1, 202-6. Khlebnikov, "Letters," *ibid.*, III, Part 3, 205-7. Khlebnikov, "Biography of Baranov," *ibid.*, IV, Part 4, 128. Potekhin, W., "Settlement of Ross," *ibid.*, V, Part 2, folio 5. "Establecimientos Rusos en California," MS, Bancroft Library, 1.

52. Gaspar de Maguna to Labayan, San Blas, January 14, 1814, MS, *Archivo General de Guerra y Marina*, Mexico, *Extante* 52, *Expediente* 1.

53. Khlebnikov, "Letters," Russian America, III, Part 3, 211.

54. Ivan Kuskov to José Argüello, Fort Ross, June 20, 1814, Provincial State Papers, XIX, 365.

55. William Pigot to Ebbets, Coast of California, March 22, 1814, Astor Papers.

56. For description of Farallone station see the following. Tikhmenev, "Historical Review," Russian America, I, Part 1, 202, 399-400. Khlebnikov, "Letters," *ibid.*, III, Part 3, 232-35. Chichinov, Zakhar, "Adventures," MS, Bancroft Library, 6-8. Corney, Peter, *Voyages in the Northern Pacific*, Honolulu, 1896, pp. 74-75. Hoover, Mildred Brooke, *The Farallon Islands, California*, Stanford University, 1932. Morrell, Captain Benjamin, *A Narrative of Four Voyages*, New York, 1832, p. 209.

gang of men and take away the others. The sea lions on that rocky outpost supplied the Aleutian Indians hunting along the California coast with the meat, blubber, and oil so essential to their diet. Every year from 100 to 200 *puds* (3,600 to 7,200 pounds) of sea-lion meat were salted down in barrels and boxes. At Fort Ross bidarkas and waterproof clothing were made from the skins and bladders of Farallone sea lions. More valuable than the sea lion, however, was the fur seal. California seals were smaller than those of the more northern regions and their black fur was coarser and therefore less valuable. However, each year the Russians killed from 1,200 to 1,500, and between 1812 and 1818, 8,427 seal skins were obtained at the Farallone station.

The isles continued to be a station for Russian and Aleutian sealers even after independent otter hunting south of Bodega was given up. In 1817 there were about thirty men on the Farallones. In 1825 Captain Benjamin Morrell found a Russian family and twenty-three Indians who had about fifty tons of cured sea-lion meat ready for the next company brig.

The fur seal became for the Russians an important medium of obtaining supplies from American ships. As repeated orders were sent from St. Petersburg to Novo-Arkhangelsk forbidding trade with foreign vessels, needed supplies were exchanged for seal skins at the Russian California base. From 1823 to 1825 William Hartnell, of the English firm, McCulloch, Hartnell and Company, received goods for seals, and was much interested in making the seal trade with the Russians an important branch of his company's business.⁵⁷ In 1823 he obtained 3,276 fur seals at Bodega. The American vessels, the *Mentor*, *Washington*, and *Arab*, took on seal skins at the Russian settlement in 1823 and 1824.⁵⁸ The complete and continued monopoly of the Russians on the seals of California is described in Morrell's *Narrative*. In 1825 after touching at the Farallones and other islands as far north as Cape Blanco, he wrote, "On these islands or keys I expected to find fur-seals; whereas I found them manned with Russians, standing ready with their rifles to shoot every seal or sea-otter that showed his head above water." Again, "Perceiving very little prospect of taking fur-seals on any part of the coast which the Russians have monopolized, without purchasing them of the intruders, we squared away. . . ."⁵⁹ In June, 1828, when Auguste Bernard Duhaut-Cilly touched at Bodega he was unable to do any business because an American ship had just taken away all the skins.⁶⁰ The Russians did not give up their Farallone outpost until years of wholesale killing exterminated the seal. Whereas the number taken in 1825 was 1,050, only fifty-four were received from the Farallones in 1833.

In contrast to sealing on island outposts, Russian otter hunting along the Spanish coast was not easy to continue upon an independent basis. After 1813 Russian otter hunters began to try to extend their activities farther from their

57. McCulloch, Hartnell and Company to John Begg and Company, San Diego, February 29, 1824, Hartnell-Zabala Letter Book, MS, Bancroft Library, 32.

58. Khlebnikov, "Letters," *Russian America*, III, Part 3, 118.

59. Morrell, *Narrative*, 212-13.

60. Duhaut-Cilly, Auguste Bernard, *Voyage autour du Monde*, Paris, 1834-1835, p. 227. A translation of the California portion of Duhaut-Cilly's voyage was printed in this *Quarterly*, Vol. VIII, his visit at Bodega and Fort Ross being described on pp. 323-27.

California base. In 1814 the *Ilmen* came to Fort Ross with supplies and with fifty Aleuts under Tarakanov. An hunting trip to the north was unsuccessful because of hostile natives. The vessel then sailed down the coast. For two days the Aleuts hunted around the Farallone Islands. Then the captain ordered them to slip into the bay at night. Tarakanov tells what happened.⁶¹

The Aleuts did so and hunted all day, killing about 100 sea otter, but when we went to the beach on the south side to camp for the night we found soldiers stationed at all the springs who would not allow any one to take any water. At this the Aleuts became frightened and started back toward the ship which had remained outside. It was dark and some wind was blowing and two bidarkas were capsized and the men, being tired with their day's work, could not save themselves.

The Aleuts who were capsized must have been seized by the Spaniards. In July, 1814, Kuskov was petitioning Governor José Argüello for Kodiaks held at the presidio and explained that "They have done no wrong but were only compelled to save themselves from the surf in the bay at the port of San Francisco where they were captured."⁶² The *Ilmen* continued to hunt southward but the crew had learned to be on the lookout for the Spaniards. One night some Aleuts who were sent ashore for water were frightened at the sight of some soldiers, and returned with empty kegs. Around the Santa Barbara Channel Islands 160 sea otters and some fur seals were taken.

The day of reckoning was coming. Some Russian sailors, eleven Aleuts and Tarakanov were ordered ashore to get fresh meat. Seeing some cattle grazing in the hills near San Pedro, the men landed, but almost immediately they were surrounded by Spanish soldiers on horseback. The frightened sailors pushed off without waiting for Tarakanov or the Aleuts, who were tied together with ropes and taken on a two days' march to Santa Barbara. There they were destined to work for two years and more before being released. The *Ilmen* proceeded on down the coast trading and hunting as it went. Upon returning to Fort Ross, the vessel brought, besides provisions, almost 400 otter skins.⁶³

The *Ilmen* in 1815 experienced the strict enforcement policy of the new governor, Pablo de Solá. Orders had come from Madrid to limit trade with the Russians to agricultural and manufactured products, thus implying that the chief concern of Spanish authorities was to keep the marine wealth of the coast from the hands of the northerners.⁶⁴ Solá was determined to enforce the law.

After taking on supplies in San Francisco in June, the *Ilmen* sailed southward to trade and hunt. In July the vessel was between San Luis Obispo and Santa

61. Tarakanov, Vasilii Petrovich, "Statement," Russian America, II, Part 2, 859.

62. Kuskov to José Argüello, Fort Ross, June 9, 1814, Provincial State Papers, XIX, 365.

63. The main account of the 1814 voyage of the *Ilmen* is the statement of Tarakanov, cited above. This is not dated and the names of geographical points are not mentioned. However, Tarakanov was on board the *Ilmen* when it left Novo-Arkhangelsk in 1814, and he was released by the Spaniards in 1816 when Kotzebue was in San Francisco. Although the circumstances of his seizure correspond in many details to those of the party under John Elliot d'Castro of the *Ilmen* at San Luis Obispo in September, 1815, there are enough differences to make it clear that it was not the same affair. Although the place of the seizure is not mentioned in Tarakanov's account, it may be fixed at a point on the coast near San Pedro. Other accounts of the voyage of the *Ilmen* follow. Guillermo Cota to José de la Guerra y Noriega, Los Angeles, September 22, 1815, MS, *Archivo General de Guerra y Marina*, Estante 52, Expediente 2. Tikhmenev, "Historical Review," Russian America, I, Part 1, 210. Khlebnikov, "Letters," *ibid.*, III, Part 3, 18. Khlebnikov, "Biography of Baranov," *ibid.*, IV, Part 3, 135-36.

64. José Luyando to Félix Calleja, Madrid, February 4, 1814, MS, *Archivo General de Guerra y Marina*, Estante 52, Expediente 9.

Barbara. The next month eight canoes commanded by Boris Tarasov of the *Ilmen* came ashore at San Pedro. When questioned by Sergeant Guillermo Cota, the Russian made known by signs that he had been there before and that "his purpose was none other than that of hunting for otter."⁶⁵ Cota ordered him to leave and warned him not to return. At that time Spanish threats meant nothing to Boris Tarasov. On September 17 he again appeared at San Pedro and asked to speak to Cota. The sergeant made full preparations, because since the Russian's first visit, he had received orders from the Santa Barbara *comandante* to seize any such intruders. Early the next day Cota ambushed his twenty-seven men. As Tarasov and his Indians approached he gave a signal. At the sight of the Spaniards the Aleuts made for their canoes. Blows followed, and several were wounded and stunned before the unruly Indians submitted. Twenty-four of them and Tarasov himself were seized and taken to the prison at Los Angeles.⁶⁶

The sign-testimony of Tarasov disclosed further information concerning Russian otter-hunting activities. He had been in charge of Aleuts left on the Santa Barbara Channel Islands by the *Ilmen* apparently before it had gone to San Francisco. He and his men had been stationed on San Nicolás for seven months, and during that time had obtained 955 skins. These furs were kept on the islands where a number of hunters still remained. He claimed that he had started to leave for Santa Catalina after he had been ordered away by Cota, but that contrary winds had prevented his departure. He had desired to talk with Cota concerning the return of his companions who were held at Los Angeles. Later he testified that he had come to San Pedro for supplies and to take shelter from the wind. He also stated that the goods which were found in the canoes at the time of the seizure were solely for the use of his men and were not for trading purposes. However, satin, coating, and rice were never known to be among the needs or wants of an Aleutian otter hunter.⁶⁷

Others on the *Ilmen* had a similar experience in northern California in 1815. On the morning after the seizure at San Pedro, the *Ilmen* put in at San Luis Obispo supposedly for water. José Aruz refused to help. On September 21 a ship was seen near Refugio north of Santa Barbara. The captain and the supercargo, John Elliot d'Castro, landed but left when threatened by Sergeant José de Ortega. José de la Guerra y Noriega, commander at Santa Barbara, the next day sent five soldiers to that part of the coast. When the men returned two days later reporting that the vessel had sailed, Guerra scraped together fourteen soldiers, and, following the orders received from Governor Solá, again dispatched them up the coast. They went with orders to seize as many as they could and "even the boat if it

65. Cota to Guerra y Noriega, Los Angeles, September 22, 1815, MS, *ibid.*, Estante 52, Expediente 2.

66. Cota to Guerra y Noriega, Los Angeles, September 19, 1815, MS, *ibid.*, Estante 52, Expediente 2. Bancroft wrongly states that Tarakanov was head of the party seized at San Pedro in September, 1815. Tarakanov at that time was working at Santa Barbara Mission. When Tarakanov was safely aboard the *Rurick* in November, 1816, Tarasov was in Tepic, Mexico, trying to obtain permission to return to Europe. Tarasov to Juan Ruiz de Apodaca, Tepic, February 21, 1817, *ibid.*, Estante 52, Expediente 5.

67. Cota to Guerra y Noriega, Los Angeles, September 22, 1815, MS, *ibid.*, Estante 52, Expediente 2. Replies of Tarasov to Solá, Monterey, October 15, 1815, Provincial State Papers, Benicia Military, MS, Bancroft Library, XLVI, 41-42. Declaration of Tarasov, San Blas, February 1, 1816, MS, *Archivo General de Guerra y Marina*, Estante 52, Expediente 4.

could be done."⁶⁸ Early the next morning the soldiers arrived at Refugio where they saw the *Ilmen* anchored in the cove. They waited in ambush. Shortly twenty-two Russians and Aleuts came ashore with the object of killing some cattle. When the Spaniards sprang out there was a run for the water. Seven were seized—John Elliot d'Castro, four Russians, one American, and one Aleutian. The captain of the vessel escaped only by swimming and although fired upon he was missed. D'Castro tried to obtain his release by bribery but to no avail. He and Tarasov were freed only after a trip to Mexico, and from two to three years passed by before the other captives were returned to their homes.⁶⁹

Independent otter hunting suffered a check by the incidents of 1814 and 1815. Until 1823 activities were limited for the most part to the seas north of Bodega. Gervasio Argüello reported that most of the eighty Indians at the Russian establishment were out hunting at the time of his visit in October, 1816.⁷⁰ Louis Choris in 1816 claimed that Kuskov had been obtaining every year almost 2,000 otters which were ordinarily sold to American ships.⁷¹ In 1818 the *Okhotsk* brought fifty Aleuts and their bidarkas to California.⁷² In the same year according to Golovin seventy-four Aleuts were sent to Cape Mendocino for otters "which are found between there and Trinity Bay (Trinidad) though not in great numbers."⁷³

The few otters obtained south of the Russian settlement between 1815 and 1823 were hunted surreptitiously. While the *Kutusov* was at Santa Cruz purchasing supplies in 1818, four Aleuts in two canoes hunted "very cautiously in order not to be noticed by the Spaniards,"⁷⁴ and in two weeks killed seventy-two sea otters, twenty of them in one night. In 1820 a Russian vessel, probably the *Ilmen* since it is described as an American bark chartered by the company, cruised about opposite San Francisco while bidarkas were sent into the bay to hunt. "The Aleuts remained away two days and then came back with only a few otters. They said the Spaniards would not even let them land to get fresh water."⁷⁵ The vessel sailed to the south, and on one of the Channel Islands over 100 otters were killed. However, "Here our supply of fresh water ran short and as the Spaniards would not allow us to land any where we sailed northward again. . . ."

Spanish prohibitive measures had put a stop to independent Russian otter hunting south of Bodega, and north of the Russian settlement the otter was rapidly becoming exterminated. Some other way would have to be found to obtain the coveted black pelts along the Spanish coast.

68. Guerra y Noriega to Solá, Santa Barbara, September 24, 1815, MS, *ibid.*, *Estante 52, Expediente 2*.

69. The Russian accounts of the *Ilmen* when it was at Refugio are the same as cited in footnote 62. A complete Spanish correspondence is contained in the expediente "Prisión de Varios Individuos del Establecimiento Ruso," MS, *Archivo General de Guerra y Marina, Estante 52, Expediente 2*.

There is a wealth of correspondence on the subject of the treatment and return of the Russian and Aleutian prisoners taken in 1814 and 1815. Such letters may be found in the following. The expediente cited above. *Documentos para la Historia de Mexico*, MS, Biblioteca Nacional, Mexico, IV, No. 8. Provincial State Papers, XIX, XX. Guerra y Noriega, José de la, *Documentos para la Historia de California*, MS, Bancroft Library, II, III.

70. Gervasio Argüello to Solá, San Francisco, October 21, 1816, Provincial State Papers, XX, 26-28.

71. Choris, Louis, *Voyage Pittoresque autour du Monde*, Paris, 1822, Part 3, 8.

72. Chichinov, "Adventures," 5.

73. Golovin, "Extracts," Russian America, III, Part 4, 70.

74. Golovin, "Extracts," *ibid.*, III, Part 4, 70.

75. Chichinov, "Adventures," 9.

PART III.

RUSSIAN-MEXICAN PARTNERSHIPS, 1823-1841

Russians and Spaniards as otter-hunting partners seemed an incompatible and impossible relationship after 1815. Yet it became the whole object of Russian negotiations. A partnership arrangement seemed the only remaining method of hunting along the Spanish coast. For five years representatives of the northern company pressed their point.

In the spring of 1817 Lieutenant Yakov Padushkin first presented to the California governor the proposition of hunting upon a share basis. Solá received the Russian with all the fine courtesy of a Spanish gentleman but conceded nothing. He promised to use his influence in obtaining viceregal permission to break down some of the trade barriers against the Russians. However, the basis of any such petition was clearly stated in a letter written to Baranov. The Russians must first withdraw from California before he would feel justified in asking the viceroy for any concessions.⁷⁶

In October of the same year, Lieutenant Hagemeister while at San Francisco corresponded with Solá on the same subject. Refusing to accept Guadalajara bills of exchange in payment for goods which were desired by Solá, the Russian outlined definite terms for an otter-hunting contract. He explained that "desiring to show my gratitude," which meant desiring to obtain trading privileges, "I take the liberty to offer . . . to furnish for the army at the very lowest prices such things for which they may have need,"⁷⁷ under the following conditions. Aleutian hunters were to be allowed to enter San Francisco Bay. All expenses of hunting would be borne by the Russian company. Skins were to be divided equally between the Russians and Spaniards. The Spanish share of furs was to be exchanged at contract prices for Russian goods. Hagemeister reminded Solá that California Indians were not skilled in sea-otter hunting and that neither skins or goods could ever be obtained by the Spaniards "with such convenience and with such small expenses."⁷⁸ Again Solá refused to consider the proposition. Provisions were sold to Hagemeister, but the governor would not allow otter hunting. Permission for that would have to be obtained from the viceroy.

Semion Yanovski, who was appointed governor of Russian America in 1821, tried to break down the firmness of Solá. He sent him a watch and a large mirror "of Russian manufacture, which I sent for to St. Petersburg, expressly for you, to give you some opinion of the esteem and regard I have for you."⁷⁹ At the same time he sent his agent Khlebnikov with instructions to try to arrange a commercial agreement. The reply of Solá was typical. He was very appreciative of the gifts and begged Yanovski to receive in return some "pheasants." However, it was not in his power to give permission for otter hunting.⁸⁰

76. Solá to Baranov, Monterey, May 5, 1817, Vallejo, Mariano, *Historia de California*, MS, Bancroft Library, IV, 206-10. Tikhmenev, "Historical Review," *Russian America*, I, Part 1, 214-15.

77. Potekhin, "Settlement of Ross," *ibid.*, V, Part 2, folio 12.

78. Potekhin, "Settlement of Ross," *ibid.*, V, Part 2, folio 12. Tikhmenev, "Historical Review," *ibid.*, I, Part 1, 216-19. Khlebnikov, "Letters," *ibid.*, III, Part 3, 211-12.

79. Semion Yanovski to Solá, Novo-Arkhangelsk, June 1/13, 1820, State Papers, Sacramento, MS, Bancroft Library, VIII, 58-60.

80. Solá to Yanovski, Monterey, August 2, 1820, *ibid.*, VIII, 60-61.

In the meantime, the subject of hunting otter in California upon a share basis had been taken to European courts. Hagemeister after his first trip to California represented to the Russian ambassador at Madrid that "We are desirous of obtaining permission from the High Court of Spain to hunt furs on the coast of California in company with His Catholic Majesty's subjects on equal shares. . . ."⁸¹ In 1820 the Russian-American Company asked Count Nesselrode, minister for foreign affairs, to procure the right from the Spanish government to hunt otter and to trade in California. In return for these privileges the company even was willing to abandon the Ross settlement if necessary.⁸² Hagemeister's successors, Yanovski and Murav'ev, continued to solicit trading concessions from the Spanish court. Considering that supplies were being obtained in California without formal consent, it is apparent that an otter-hunting right had become of paramount importance to the Russians.

After Mexican independence the question of Russian otter hunting received the immediate consideration of the new government. In December, 1821, Solá's letter relative to the matter was referred by Agustín de Iturbide to other Mexican officials. The final decision was that since the Mexican government did not have sufficient ships to prevent clandestine otter hunting, it would be best to make an agreement for one year only, on condition that no settlement be established on the coast and that none of the mission Indians be employed in Russian canoes.⁸³ As a result an agreement was signed at Monterey on December 1, 1823.

The first Russian-Mexican contract for otter hunting in California was to last for only four months. Russians were permitted to hunt otter and other marine animals anywhere from San Francisco to San Diego. Skins were to be divided into two equal parts. The Russians were obliged to sell their share to the Mexican government at forty-five *pesos* for each skin and were to receive in return wheat at three *pesos* per *fanega*. During the term of the first contract, the Russians agreed to pay the Aleuts and to keep their bidarkas in repair. Provisions for the hunters were to be supplied by the California government although the expenses were to be borne equally by both parties. If the contract was renewed, Californians were to pay the Aleuts at the rate of two *piastres* for large skins and one *piastre* for small ones.⁸⁴

San Francisco Bay was the field for the first hunt. Here otter seemed to be thicker than ever before. The Indians claimed that these animals had come to the California coast to escape the ruthless hunters of northern waters. Juan Bautista Alvarado describes how they entered the bay in great shoals at about the time of the first contract.⁸⁵ José Fernández writes that along the shore of the harbor from San Francisco to the estuary of Santa Clara "the ground appeared covered with black sheets due to the great quantity of otter which were there."⁸⁶

81. Yanovski to Solá, Novo-Arkhangelsk, June 1/13, 1820, *ibid.*, VIII, 58-60.

82. Tikhmenev, "Historical Review," Russian America, I, Part 1, 222-23. Potekhin, "Settlement of Ross," *ibid.*, V, Part 2, folio 13.

83. José María Narváez to Antonio Valdés, Guadalajara, January 7, 1822, *Californias*, XLV, No. 1.

84. Khlebnikov, "Letters," Russian America, III, Part 3, 212-13. Fernández, José, *Cosas de California*, MS, Bancroft Library, 25-26.

85. Alvarado, *Historia de California*, II, 7.

86. Fernández, *Cosas*, 26.

By January 4, 1824, one month after the contract was signed, 455 skins were taken in the bay. Ignacio Martínez, *comandante* at San Francisco, was accused by Argüello of having a private otter-hunting arrangement with Karl Schmidt, manager of Fort Ross. Martínez quickly informed the governor, however, that the bidarkas sent by Schmidt had come down in two groups. The canoes sent in the latter part of December joined the others already there, making a total of twenty-five. In January, 1824, the bidarkas returned to Ross to be repaired. The latter part of the same month Captain John Cooper came to Bodega on the *Rover*, which had been purchased by Argüello, to receive half of the skins taken at San Francisco that season. Evidently Cooper had some difficulty in obtaining his cargo. He wrote to Khlebnikov that "... it is a plain and evident fact too notorious to be contradicted that there was taken by this last expedition upwards of seven hundred otter skins in and about St. Fran. . . . the last information was that there was about 600 dried and on the stretch. It appears very mysterious to me that Don Lewis part is but 112 out of upwards of 700."⁸⁷ The *Rover* finally sailed across to Manila with 303 otter skins and 300 otter tails.⁸⁸ Other canoes came from Bodega to carry on the first contract. In February, 1824, eleven bidarkas arrived at San Francisco and eight more were expected. All were sent immediately to the San Pablo side of the bay "in order not to miss the calm days."⁸⁹ At the same time, Aleuts hunted in Monterey Bay where, by March, 429 skins had been secured.⁹⁰

Argüello on his own authority renewed the contract after its expiration in March, 1824. He justified his act on two scores. He explained that the Russians "without any obstacle have been benefiting by this valuable branch of trade . . . which we, being the owners, have not had and which we have seen foreigners enjoy."⁹¹ The contract system was a means of controlling clandestine otter hunting, and furthermore, the furs would be an exchange medium for much-needed army supplies. Aleutian hunters this time were sent as far south as San Pedro. From June to October 624 otters were taken.⁹²

After 1824, otter contracts with the Russians were made with individual ship captains. Some arrangement was made by José María Herrera, Mexican *comisario*, with Captain Beuseman of the *Baikal* between August and November, 1825. The Russian captain with his vessel fully equipped for hunting proceeded to San Diego in November to take on grain, expecting his Aleuts in the meantime to pursue otters. In the southern port he met the new California governor, José María Echeandía. On board the *Baikal* Spaniard and Russian drank a toast to the young Mexican Republic. However, when Echeandía found out the nature

87. John Cooper to Khlebnikov, Alviso, José Antonio, *Documentos para la Historia de California*, MS, Bancroft Library, No. 189. This letter has no date but it must have been written in January, 1824, between the time of the purchase of the *Rover* by Argüello in December, 1823, and the sailing of Cooper for the Orient in February, 1824. Other accounts of the hunting from December to January, 1824, follow. Luis Argüello to Ignacio Martínez, Monterey, January 12, 1824, Departmental Records, MS, Bancroft Library, I, 76. Martínez to Luis Argüello, San Francisco, January 22, 1824, State Papers, Sacramento, XIV, 4. Khlebnikov, "Letters," Russian America, III, Part 3, 214.

88. Vallejo, Mariano, *Documentos para la Historia de California*, MS, Bancroft Library, XXVIII, No. 360.

89. Martínez to Luis Argüello, San Francisco, February 5, 1824, State Papers, Sacramento, XIV, 4.

90. Khlebnikov, "Letters," Russian America, III, Part 3, 214.

91. Luis Argüello to José Manuel Ruíz, Monterey, August 9, 1824, Departmental Records, I, 155-57.

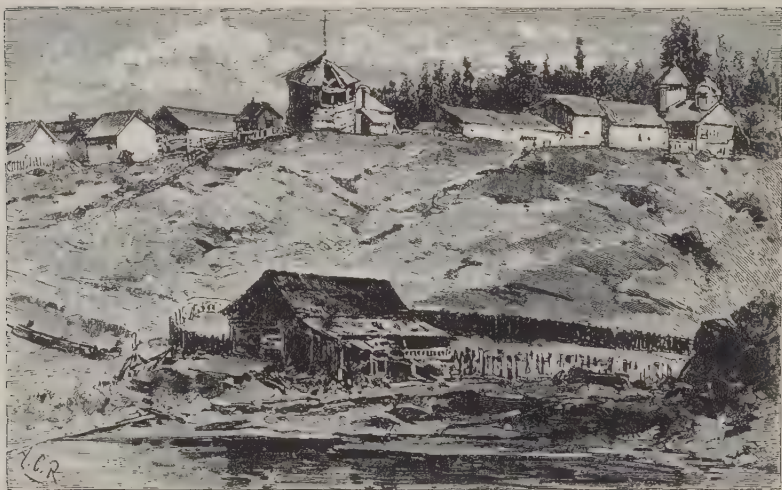
92. Khlebnikov, "Letters," Russian America, III, Part 3, 214.



THE RUSSIAN CHURCH AT FORT ROSS IN 1899
(After photograph by Frank B. Rodolph; courtesy of Miss Honoria Tuomey.)



THE SOLDIERS' QUARTERS AT FORT ROSS IN 1912
(Courtesy of Miss Honoria Tuomey.)



VIEW OF FORT ROSS FROM THE LANDING
(From "In a Redwood Logging Camp" by Ernest Ingersoll; *Harper's Magazine*,
Vol. 66, No. 392, Jan. 1883.)

of the arrangement under which the *Baikal* was cruising along the coast, he cancelled all, no doubt resenting Herrera's assumption of authority. To save the Russians from losing on their investment in hunting equipment, the governor agreed to a new four-month contract. Hunting was to be confined to the coast and islands between Santa Cruz and San Diego. The California government was to receive one-third of the skins. Between November 26 and February 14, 1826, the Aleuts in their twenty-five canoes secured 468 furs.⁹³

The next otter-hunting privileges were solicited by Captain Adolphus Etolin in 1828. He was bringing the *Baikal* principally to load with salt at San Quintín but was also commissioned by Chistiakov, governor of the Russian American establishments, to obtain a permit for hunting sea otter at the same time. Echeandía conceded, provided, as he wrote Etolin, that "you hunt with no more than two canoes, limiting yourself to the coast from San Diego to San Quintín, giving in payment one half of the skins."⁹⁴ Four Aleuts in two canoes could spear but few otter—only sixty-three while the *Baikal* took on salt in December and January, 1829.

The position of the Russians in the California otter trade began to change by 1830. Mexican officials no longer approved of the policy of giving the northerners special trading privileges in California since it was counter to the government's desire of nationalizing commerce. Also, by 1830 individual Mexicans and Mexican companies were eager to engage in the otter trade. As a result the Russians were demoted. Former partners became mere employees. The first indication of a changed government attitude toward the Russian position in the California otter trade appeared in 1828. A demand came from Mexico for an explanation of the reasons for making otter contracts. Echeandía answered for himself and for his predecessor. The contract system was a means of supplying California troops. In Echeandía's opinion the Russians were not abusing their privileges. It was rather the Americans who were hunting illegally.⁹⁵

The end of Russian contracts was definitely announced by Governor Manuel Victoria. Baron Wrangell, governor of Russian America, sought in 1830 to reestablish commercial relations with California. Confident of the success of his overtures he wrote, "The certainty which I have that you . . . will not hesitate in permitting us to hunt otter on the coasts of California . . . has made me give beforehand to Mr. Khlebnikov the order to take aboard the frigate *Baikal* a certain number of Aleuts with their bidarkas."⁹⁶ Victoria's reply of March, 1831, was a direct refusal. He could not "permit the taking of otters, this being prohibited in

93. Terms of Echeandía's agreement with Khlebnikov, undated, State Papers, Sacramento, XI, 13-14. José María Echeandía to Manuel Gómez Pedraza, San Diego, April 22, 1826, *ibid.*, XIX, 27-31. Khlebnikov, "Letters," Russian America, III, Part 3, 215.

94. Echeandía to Adolphus Etolin, San Diego, December 10, 1828, MS, *Secretaría de Gobernación*, Mexico. Other accounts of the *Baikal* in 1828-1829 follow. Chistiakov to Echeandía, Novo-Arkhangelsk, October 13, 1828, Departmental State Papers, MS, Bancroft Library, II, 65-67. José Estudillo to Hartnell, San Diego, December 22, 1828, Vallejo, *Documentos*, XXIX, No. 299. Echeandía to Juan Bandini, San Diego, February 12, 1829, Departmental Records, VII, 85.

95. Pedraza to Juan José Espinosa de los Monteros, Mexico, September 23, 1828, MS, *Secretaría de Gobernación*. Espinosa to Echeandía, September 27, 1828, *ibid.* Echeandía to Espinosa, San Diego, May 22, 1829, *ibid.*

96. Ferdinand Petrovich Wrangell to Manuel Victoria, Novo-Arkhangelsk, October 20, 1830, Vallejo, *Documentos*, XXX, No. 138.

the terms asked for by a law whose execution I am charged with."⁹⁷ As a result, Khlebnikov with his Aleuts and bidarkas left San Francisco. In the same month Victoria issued a related decree permitting otter hunting only on condition that two-thirds of the hunters were California natives and that duties be paid on all skins obtained by Aleuts.⁹⁸ However, when reporting on his decision, the Mexican governor insisted that the Russians "are good people," very different from those of the United States who were operating without license.⁹⁹ Of contrasting note was Wrangell's sarcastic reply, "...the company now having discovered other means of providing for the needs of its colonies no longer finds itself in the indispensable necessity of embarrassing the government of California by its relations with this country."¹⁰⁰

Developments of the next few years showed still more that the Russians would have no chance in the California otter trade. Wrangell, forgetting his answer of 1831, appeared at Fort Ross in person in 1833 and again in 1835 in order to establish more satisfactory commercial relations with California. On his last trip he came with specific instructions from the head office of the Russian-American Company, among which was the order to renew if possible the otter contract system. Mexican authorities, however, did not consider him an authorized representative of the Russian government.¹⁰¹ In 1835, Aleksandr Markov learned by experience that otter hunting was not permitted without a license. When returning from San Quintín with a load of salt a few of his crew killed about fifty sea otter. Upon arriving at San Francisco he was refused permission to enter the harbor.¹⁰²

From the days of Victoria until the abandonment of Fort Ross in 1841, Russians could profit from the California otter trade only as employees of Mexican traders. In 1831 Juan Bautista Alvarado was hunting with the aid of a Russian and several Kodiaks. In 1832 and 1833 Alvarado, José Castro, Ramón Estrada, and Joaquín Ortega received a license for hunting and made arrangements with Manager Kostromitinov for the hiring of enough Aleuts to man eighteen canoes. The Spaniards not being able to find enough native Indians to complete the legal quota, obtained from José Figueroa a special concession "for this once." The results so far as the Russians were concerned were practically the same as under the old contract system, since the pay of the Aleuts was to be one-half of the skins. Cooper in 1833 employed Aleuts for the operation of twelve bidarkas. In fact until 1841 Aleutian Indians composed one-third of the crew of practically all of the many Mexicans who engaged in otter hunting by government permit.¹⁰³

97. Victoria to Wrangell, Monterey, March 5, 1831, *ibid.*, XXX, No. 189.

98. Departmental Records, IX, 94.

99. Victoria to Lucas Alamán, Monterey, April 13, 1831, *ibid.*, IX, 121-22.

100. Wrangell to Victoria, Novo-Arkhangelsk, September 27, 1831, State Papers, Missions and Colonization, MS, Bancroft Library, II, 322-24.

101. Wrangell to José María Estrada, Mexico, February 28, 1836, MS, *Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores*, Mexico. Wrangell to Estrada, Mexico, March 12, 1836, *ibid.* Potekhin, "Settlement of Ross," Russian America, V, Part 2, folios 17-18. Zavalishin, Dimitrii, "The Affairs of the Ross Colony," *ibid.*, V, Part 1.

102. Sokolov, Vasilii, "The Voyage of Alexander Markov," MS, Bancroft Library, 5-6.

103. Juan Alvarado to Cooper, San Francisco, April 3, 1831, Vallejo, *Documentos*, XXX, No. 200. Estrada to José Figueroa, January 24, 1833, Monterey, *ibid.*, XXXI, No. 3. Alvarado, *Historia*, II, 39-40. Departmental State Papers, III, 76, 146, 158, 167.

Decreasing returns from black pelts had much to do with the final withdrawal of the Russians from the southern coast. Legal restrictions and the gradual extermination of the otter meant the end of one important means of support for the Ross settlement. It also meant that there was no further need for a southern hunting base. Sir George Simpson when reporting to the Hudson's Bay Company in 1842 told of the end of Russian otter hunting in California, and added, "After the loss of that profitable branch of trade . . . the Russian American Company withdrew."¹⁰⁴

The sea otter had brought the Russians to California. It had accounted greatly for their continued interest in the southern coast, and decreasing returns from sea-otter hunts was one of the reasons for their withdrawal. As a means of entering California seas, the last hunting ground of the Pacific, the Russians had resorted to the method of contracting with Boston sea captains. After a decade, the Angloman had been shaken off and independent hunting had been tried. However, Spanish opposition had been prohibitory. Russia then had become a petitioner for the privilege of being the business partner of Spain. The privilege had never been given. The Mexican government during the first years of its control in California had given the concession, for a gainful purpose. Finally, the Russians had become merely experienced employees of licensed Mexican merchants. Thus, for four decades, "the spirit of the Russian hunters," so nobly expressed in the indomitable Baranov, had carried Slavic seamen and their Aleutian crews through three trying stages of activity along the California coast.

ADELE OGDEN.

104. George Simpson to the governor, deputy governor, and committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, Honolulu, March 1, 1842, in *American Historical Review*, XIV, 85.

THE RUSSIAN WITHDRAWAL FROM CALIFORNIA

LESS than three years after the fascinating Rezanoff had sailed through the Golden Gate, leaving to the lovely Doña Concepcion Argüello only blissful memories and undying hopes, another Russian sailed along the nearby coast. The newcomer was Ivan Kuskoff on the *Kadiak* from Sitka.

Rezanoff's California venture had given him two new objectives. One was the establishment of permanent trade relations with California and the other the founding of a settlement north of San Francisco Bay which might serve as a trading and agricultural supply station for the benefit of the Alaskan colonies. In his report to the Russian American Company Rezanoff eloquently urged the adoption of his two-fold plan,¹ in which, before leaving Sitka, he succeeded in arousing the interest of Governor Baranoff.² Two years later Kuskoff was sent to examine the coast with a view to the selection of a suitable location for a station.

Kuskoff sailed into Bodega Bay, made some nearby explorations and, upon his return to Sitka in October, reported that he had found a suitable harbor and a wholly satisfactory site for the projected settlement.³ After another interval he was dispatched to Bodega in 1810 and then again in 1811.⁴ His fourth arrival was in March, 1812.⁵ It was then that an actual occupation began which was to end with the year 1841—a span of close to thirty years.

My purpose is not to relate the history of Russian occupation. Instead it is to indicate the major reasons for the abandonment of the region, in the light of failures to realize the original and later objectives, and to furnish the documents that describe the attempts of the Russians to dispose of their holdings—first to Englishmen, next to Californians and finally and successfully to a naturalized Swiss newly established on the Sacramento.

The prime purpose of the Russian American Company in establishing settlements in California was trade. This comprehended an extension of otter hunting to the shores of New Albion and the Farallones⁶ and the barter of cloth and iron for wheat and barley, peas, beans, tallow and dried meats for the northern colonies.⁷ With the rapid falling off of the otter supply after 1818, the agricultural and stock-raising activities assumed greater and greater importance.⁸ Simultaneously and for various reasons the trade relations with California failed to reach satisfactory proportions. Finally the expense of the enterprise appeared disproportionate to the return, and when the last hope of success through expansion was thwarted no incentive remained for maintaining the station. When this was fully

1. Tikhméneff, P., *Historical Review of the Origin of the Russian American Company*, St. Petersburg, 1861. Translation from the Russian in manuscript "Russian America," II, Appendix, 267, Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California. An important interpretative article entitled "Russian Expansion to America: its Bibliographical Foundations," by Robert J. Kerner was published in 1931 in the *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, Volume XXV.

2. Potechine, W., "Settlement of Ross," Extract from the *Journal of the Department of Manufactures and Trade*, St. Petersburg, 1859, Translation from the Russian in "Russian America," V, Part II, 5.

3. Potechine, 5.

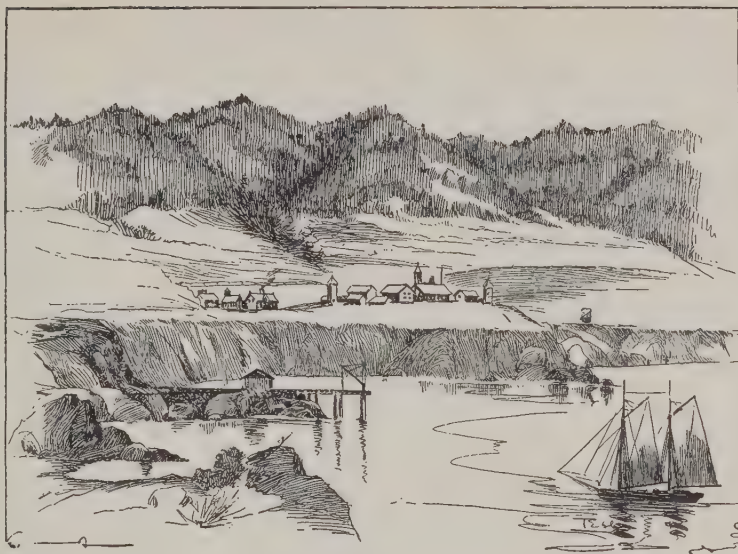
4. Tikhméneff, I, 208.

5. *Ibid.*, I, 208.

6. *Ibid.*, I, 210-212.

7. Potechine, 3.

8. *Ibid.*, 14-15.



THE LANDING AT FORT ROSS IN THE NINETIES
(From *Russian Settlement in California, Fort Ross, Sonoma County*;
by R. A. Thompson, Santa Rosa, 1896.)

recognized and abandonment officially ordered, every effort was made to salvage as much as possible from the wreckage.⁹

At the outset the Spanish Californians appeared to place no obstacle in the way of settlement. José Argüello, *Comandante* at San Francisco, learned of the presence of the Russians in July of 1812 and promptly sent Gabriel Moraga to investigate. Moraga made a thorough survey and before leaving amiably agreed to use his influence to encourage the desired trade relations.¹⁰ He again visited the Russians in January, 1813, and later reported to Argüello on his observations. Governor Arrillaga, duly notified, communicated in turn with the viceroy concerning the visitations of Moraga. No formal trade concessions appear to have been granted, but Russian authorities attest that on Moraga's second journey he brought gifts of cattle and horses¹¹ and that Kuskoff had no difficulty in exchanging a cargo of supplies for one of foodstuffs to the value of \$14,000.¹²

In 1813 the viceroy sent a protest to the Russians which, in 1814, Moraga, on a third visit, conveyed to Kuskoff.¹³ The latter indicated that he would lay the matter before Baranoff and the Company and would then await the official decision.¹⁴ Meanwhile Governor Arrillaga died and Argüello filled the executive office

9. Tikhméneff, I, 365-66.

10. *Ibid.*, I, 212-13.

11. *Ibid.*, I, 213.

12. Potechine, 7.

13. *Ibid.*, 7-8.

14. Tikhméneff, I, 214.

ad interim. The acting governor, not so tractable as his predecessor, peremptorily demanded the Russian withdrawal from California.¹⁵ Kuskoff again declared his inability to comply until he received instructions from Baranoff.¹⁶

The new governor, Sola, made his own investigation of the Russian situation and in 1816 summoned Kuskoff to San Francisco. Again the latter temporized¹⁷ and in the following year Sola wrote to the viceroy that it would be difficult to oust the intruders.¹⁸ Notwithstanding the fact that in 1818 he was ordered by the viceroy to expel the Russians, Sola declared that he could not comply because of inadequate soldiery.¹⁹

With the retirement of Governor Sola, following the establishment of Mexican independence, Don Luis Argüello assumed temporary charge of the California government. On December 1, 1823, he entered into an agreement with the Russians permitting them to hunt otter for four months to March 31, 1824.²⁰ An attempted renewal of the contract in 1825 failed, but the new governor, Echeandia, informally allowed the Russians to hunt in the early months of 1826. The yield was not more than 468 pelts. A temporary permit in 1828 was even less fruitful.²¹ In three years' hunting the Russian American Company netted but 1181 pelts. The end of otter hunting in California was obviously in sight.

Ship-building for a short time assumed a temporary importance in Russian California, but the wood was "cut in sap" and used before being thoroughly dried, with disastrous results.²²

Agriculture and stock-raising also failed to yield an adequate return. Kuskoff had no training as a farmer but he made a beginning at least.²³ His successor Karl Schmidt, governor or manager at Fort Ross from 1821 to 1826, was chiefly interested in ship-building. When that industry failed, however, he too tried to do something with agriculture.²⁴ Schmidt's successor, Paul Shelikoff, 1826 to 1829, did everything he could to develop farming.²⁵ However, except for the year 1823, the average yield was not over five to one.²⁶

Cattle-breeding, begun under Kuskoff and continued under his successors, was figuratively and literally an up-hill struggle. The utilization of pasture land for grain cultivation left only wooded and rough country for the stock.²⁷ Hence the ratio of receipts to expenditures in this branch of industry fell far short of reasonable expectations.²⁸

15. *Ibid.*, I, 215.

16. *Ibid.*, I, 215.

17. *Conferencia celebrada en el presidio de San Francisco*, Provincial State Papers, MS, XX, 29-33. Original in Spanish.

18. Sola, Governor Pablo Vicente to the Viceroy, Monterey, January 2, 1817, in Archives of California, Provincial Records, MS, IX, 155-67. Original in Spanish.

19. Sola, P. V., to the Viceroy, Monterey, April 3, 1818, summarized in Archives of California, Provincial Records, MS, IX, 195-96. Original in Spanish.

20. Khlebnikoff, K., Letters on America, MS, 142. Translation from the Russian in Russian America, III, Part III, 212.

21. *Ibid.*, 145.

22. *Ibid.*, 149.

23. *Ibid.*, 150.

24. *Ibid.*, 151.

25. *Ibid.*, 152-53.

26. Potechine, 14-15.

27. Khlebnikoff, 153.

28. *Ibid.*, 153-54.

Sheep-raising proved unprofitable because of the coarse quality of the wool and the inability of the Russians to fabricate it into blankets as did the California missionaries.²⁹

Fruits and vegetables brought no revenue to the Company so could not be accounted as valuable.³⁰

Trade with the Californians never reached satisfactory proportions and was frequently attended with annoyances due to the suspicions of Californian and Mexican officials. Governors Echeandia, Victoria and Figueroa every now and then disturbed the even tenor of Russian arrangements.

In 1830 Baron Wrangell became governor or general manager of the Russian colonies in America. During his incumbency Figueroa apparently played a double game, encouraging the Russians on the one hand and reporting adversely in regard to them to the superior government in Mexico.³¹

In the course of a visit to Fort Ross in 1833, Baron Wrangell established William E. P. Hartnell as agent for the Russian American Company at Yerba Buena, where he was commissioned to procure produce from the Californians and exemptions from duty payments.³²

According to a Russian authority the expenditures for the California establishments from 1825 to 1829 totaled 224,171 roubles, while the receipts for the same period amounted only to 43,858 roubles.³³ Hence it is not surprising that Baron Wrangell, soon after his arrival at Sitka, became interested in the business problems of Fort Ross. At first he appeared to regard its agricultural progress as fairly satisfactory but in April, 1834, in his report to the Russian American Company he recommended the foundation of agricultural and cattle-raising settlements to the eastward of the area then occupied. To this end he even advocated the purchase of the missions of San Rafael and Sonoma.³⁴

In a letter to Wrangell Governor Figueroa hinted at the desirability of attempting to interest the Tsar in a formal recognition of Mexican independence. Nothing loath, Wrangell readily embodied the suggestion in his report, recommending it as a suitable quid pro quo.³⁵

The Company, agreeable to Wrangell's recommendations, brought the whole matter to the attention of the Tsar who positively refused to allow any negotiations involving the question of recognition. Consequently the Company was able to permit Wrangell to negotiate nothing more than a commercial treaty and to arrange, if possible, for the purchase of the lands north of San Francisco Bay.³⁶

Baron Wrangell thereupon surrendered his governorship to his successor, Kuprianoff, and late in 1835 sailed for Monterey. Arriving there he was grieved

29. *Ibid.*, 156.

30. *Ibid.*, 155.

31. Bancroft, H. H., *History of California*, IV, 162.

32. Vallejo, M. G., *Documentos para la historia de California*, MS, XXXI, 21. Bancroft Library. Original in Spanish.

33. Potechine, 15.

34. Zavalishin, Dmitry, *Affairs of the Ross Colony*, Moscow, 1866. Translation from the Russian in *Russian America*, V, Part I, 13-14.

35. Tikhméneff, I, 362.

36. *Ibid.*, I, 362.

to learn that the friendly Figueroa had recently died. He went on to Mexico, however, in the hope of securing some advantages, but as he really had nothing to offer he was unable to accomplish anything other than to receive a courteously worded note from the Mexican government acquainting him with its willingness to conclude a treaty of the character indicated provided the Tsar should have the same desire. In that case the Mexican minister at London would be empowered to conclude such a treaty.³⁷ With this communication, Baron Wrangell continued his journey to St. Petersburg, submitted it together with his report, and the whole matter was officially reviewed and finally dropped.³⁸

The failure of Wrangell's plans marked the beginning of the end of Russian California. The annual deficits continued,³⁹ hopes for an agricultural expansion were definitely dashed, and the relations with Mexico, never satisfactory, had apparently now reached an impasse. The Russian American Company saw no future advantage in maintaining the settlements and soon decided upon their early abandonment. To this the Tsar gave his formal sanction on April 15, 1839.⁴⁰

All that remained to be done was to dispose of the properties and to that end the colonial representatives of the Company next bent all their efforts. Late in 1839 or early in 1840 a contract was entered into with the Hudson's Bay Company for the annual delivery of foodstuffs to the Alaskan colonies at Sitka.⁴¹ This arrangement removed the last vestige of need for maintaining the California colony.

In April, 1840, Sir James Douglas of the Hudson's Bay Company visited Governor Kuprianoff at Sitka. While there he received an offer of the California properties for the sum of \$30,000 (Document I).⁴² This Douglas proposed to report to Doctor John McLoughlin at Fort Vancouver who might open negotiations if interested. Nothing further appears to have been done about it and in the following year the Russians cast their lines elsewhere.

The year 1840 furnished a dramatic episode in the *Lausanne* affair, in the course of which an American ship captain succeeded in precipitating a quarrel between the Governor of Fort Ross and the Sonoma commandant, Don Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo. Briefly stated the facts of the case are as follows:

Josiah Spalding, captain of the American ship *Lausanne*, coasting south from the Columbia, dropped anchor at Bodega, which he chose to conceive as a Russian free port. He hoped to save anchorage dues and possibly to reap some trade profits. Governor Rotcheff, although doubtless surprised at the unprecedented procedure, interposed no serious objection and set out for Yerba Buena and Monterey without imposing any restrictions upon the captain, crew or passengers. Spalding also departed for Yerba Buena, and in his absence some of the passengers called upon Vallejo at Sonoma and solicited passports permitting them to remain in California. The commandant, thus apprised of the irregular procedure,

37. *Ibid.*, I, 364.

38. *Ibid.*, I, 364.

39. *Potechine*, 19.

40. *Ibid.*, 19; Tikhméneff, I, 364-67.

41. Tikhméneff, I, 351-52.

42. The Documents referred to are printed in the Appendix to this account.

promptly dispatched an officer with a detail of soldiers to Bodega to order the return of all passengers and crew to the vessel and to prevent any illicit trade.

Captain Spalding visited Vallejo on his return from Yerba Buena and was duly called to account for his anchorage dues. Spalding demurred but was permitted to continue his journey to Bodega. Soon afterward Rotcheff appeared on the scene and engaged in a heated altercation with the officer sent from Sonoma by Vallejo. The officer reported the matter to Vallejo and the latter sent orders to Rotcheff denying his right to travel beyond the Russian area of occupation. These orders the angry Rotcheff refused to receive. Spalding soon after weighed anchor and sailed away, having created trouble enough by his ill-advised action.⁴³ Rotcheff was still nursing his rage at Vallejo when late in October Kuprianoff, retiring as colonial governor and on his way home from Sitka, paid a visit to the port of San Francisco, where he remained several weeks, chiefly occupied in investigating the *Lausanne* tangle. He succeeded only in losing his temper, however, and finally sailed on his homeland journey, in the course of which perhaps the ocean breezes somewhat cooled his indignation.

On the first of January, 1841, Vallejo, advised of the Russians' intention to abandon their California settlements, attributed their decision to his own well-played role in the *Lausanne* drama. Obviously he was unaware of the fact that the order had been given some fifteen months before Captain Spalding dropped anchor in Bodega Bay. Writing to Mexico he reported that the Russians were seeking a purchaser of their properties and recommended that immediate steps be taken to assume possession and to establish a garrisoned colony there (Documents II and III).

Peter Kostromitinoff, successor to Hartnell as Russian agent at Yerba Buena, on February 16 formally approached Vallejo on the subject of the purchase of Fort Ross for the sum of 30,000 pesos. He indicated that payment might be made half in cash or in Hudson's Bay Company warrants, or partly in each and half in produce, and he further advised that the Russians also wished to dispose of a launch of twenty-five tons (Document IV).

Colonel Vallejo, replying to Kostromitinoff on February 19 and evidently playing for time, discussed the offer of the Russian agent and the proposed terms without in the least committing himself. He contrived, however, to hold the matter open for further correspondence and concluded his letter with assurances of "respect and particular appreciation" (Document V).

The president of Mexico, writing through his secretary to Governor Alvarado under date of March 11, acknowledged receipt of the information of the intention of the Russians to abandon their California settlements and then set down his instructions as to immediate procedures. He authorized the immediate taking over of the properties, expressed some uncertainty in regard to the future district status of the region and prescribed the means whereby acceptable foreigners might acquire residential rights and privileges there. He directed that a careful survey and census should be prepared and that all reports should be forwarded

43. Bancroft, H. H., *History of California*, IV, 171-73.

promptly. In conclusion he advised the governor to supplement the official orders with such additional rules and regulations as his good judgment might direct (Document VI).

Kostromitinoff left the matter of the sale of the property in the air for some weeks and made a journey to Sitka. He returned on the 15th of July, and two days later sent a courteous note to Vallejo notifying him of his arrival. He did not refer to their previous correspondence, but the announcement of his return probably was intended to pave the way for a meeting of the minds (Document VII).

In the meanwhile it is not unlikely that Kostromitinoff had approached Captain John A. Sutter on the subject of the desire of the Russians to sell out. According to an anonymous publication printed in 1860 Rotcheff on July 26 wrote Sutter a letter in which he reported the arrival of Kostromitinoff from Sitka with instructions to decline Sutter's offer since it contemplated only the purchase of the cattle and not the real estate and other personal property. An alleged copy of the letter appears in the pamphlet (Document VIII).

Under date of July 27 Vallejo indited an exuberant epistle to Governor Alvarado. In it he announced (rather tardily) the forthcoming evacuation of the Russians, mentioned Kostromitinoff's offer to sell him everything including "even the acres of ground that Ross, Bodega and the neighboring ranches contain," and earnestly begged Alvarado to come to Sonoma to help conclude a matter so important to the northern frontier (Document IX).

Kostromitinoff's inventory and proposed agreement, referred to in Vallejo's letter of July 27, included all the lands, improvements, chattels and livestock of Fort Ross and Bodega and the three ranches in between. The price was not set down but the payments were to be made in drafts on the Hudson's Bay Company, or half in those and the balance in produce. Three years' time was allowed for full settlement. According to the inventory the livestock numbered 3540 head (Document X).

In Alvarado's reply to Vallejo's letter he expressed regret that the condition of his health forbade his acceptance of the invitation to make the journey to Sonoma. He added expressions of his own pleasure at the coming departure of the "usurping" Russians but declared that no steps might as yet be taken towards taking possession. Further official correspondence with the governor at Sitka was awaited and likewise additional advices from the president of Mexico before any agreement to purchase might be made. Towards the end of his letter he suggested the desirability of waiting for the Russians to abandon the properties and then as a matter of right to step in and take them (Document XI).

At some time between July 27 and August 27 Vallejo evidently made a tentative offer of \$9,000 for the livestock alone. Pending the settlement of the question of the right of the Russians to sell their real estate and improvements he presumably felt that the acquisition of the livestock was purely a personal matter involving no legal complications. Indeed it is not unlikely that he had never entertained any desire or intention to purchase anything except the livestock. His interest in the Kostromitinoff proposal may have been only concern lest the holdings should become otherwise alienated (Document XII).

The tone of Captain Sutter's letter of August 10 to Antonio Suñol indicates some resentment towards the Russians. Probably the communication of July 26 from Rotcheff had something to do with it. At any rate this letter of Sutter's offers substantial evidence of the genuineness of that of July 26 (Document XIII).

It may be that Alvarado failed to send his reply to Vallejo's letter of July 27 with customary promptness, notwithstanding the fact that the reply bears the date of the 29th. We know that Vallejo ultimately received it and filed it, but on August 11 he wrote the governor and reminded him that his letter remained unanswered. Next he announced that Kostromitinoff, not satisfied with Vallejo's reasons for being unable to consummate a contract of sale, intended calling upon the governor for verification and to justify the Russian rights in the case (Document XIV).

Alvarado's reply is dated August 14. In it he referred to both of Vallejo's letters and agreed with his views denying the Russians' right to sell the real estate or improvements. He expressed the fear that the "barbarians" might burn down their buildings, although such conduct, he declared, would be most reprehensible. He concluded with the promise to clarify the situation in Kostromitinoff's mind when he called (Document XV).

On August 27 Kostromitinoff, following his call upon the governor at Monterey, wrote to Vallejo that it was quite clear that the Superior Government had not denied the right of the Russians to sell their holdings but had only authorized delay until such time as they should announce their evacuation. Consequently Kostromitinoff argued that no obstacles stood in the way of a sale and that he desired to have Vallejo's immediate acceptance or rejection of the offer (Document XVI).

Vallejo replied the very next day, declaring, in accordance with his previous statement, that because no governmental permission had been given no purchase could be made. He concluded with a renewal of his offer for the cattle. This letter closed the correspondence between the Russian agent and the commandant (Document XVII). Vallejo's brother-in-law, Jacob Leese, was said to have later offered \$20,000 for the property, payable \$5,000 in cash and the balance in three equal annual installments. No verification of this offer has been unearthed as yet (Document XVIII).

Captain Sutter's letter of September 1 to Suñol contained the statement that the Russians had reopened negotiations with him following their failure to "come to an agreement with Mr. Vallejo." He added that he would be "a little more exacting now" (Document XIX).

Events henceforth moved rapidly. On September 4 Governor Rotcheff arrived at Sutter's Fort on the schooner *Sacramento*. He urged Sutter to return with him to Bodega for the purpose of meeting some persons who were officially empowered to transact business with him. Despite his declaration of three days before Sutter promptly accepted the invitation and with Rotcheff made all haste to Bodega. Arriving there the purchase of the Russian property for \$30,000 was very quickly agreed upon (Documents XXVIII and XXIX).

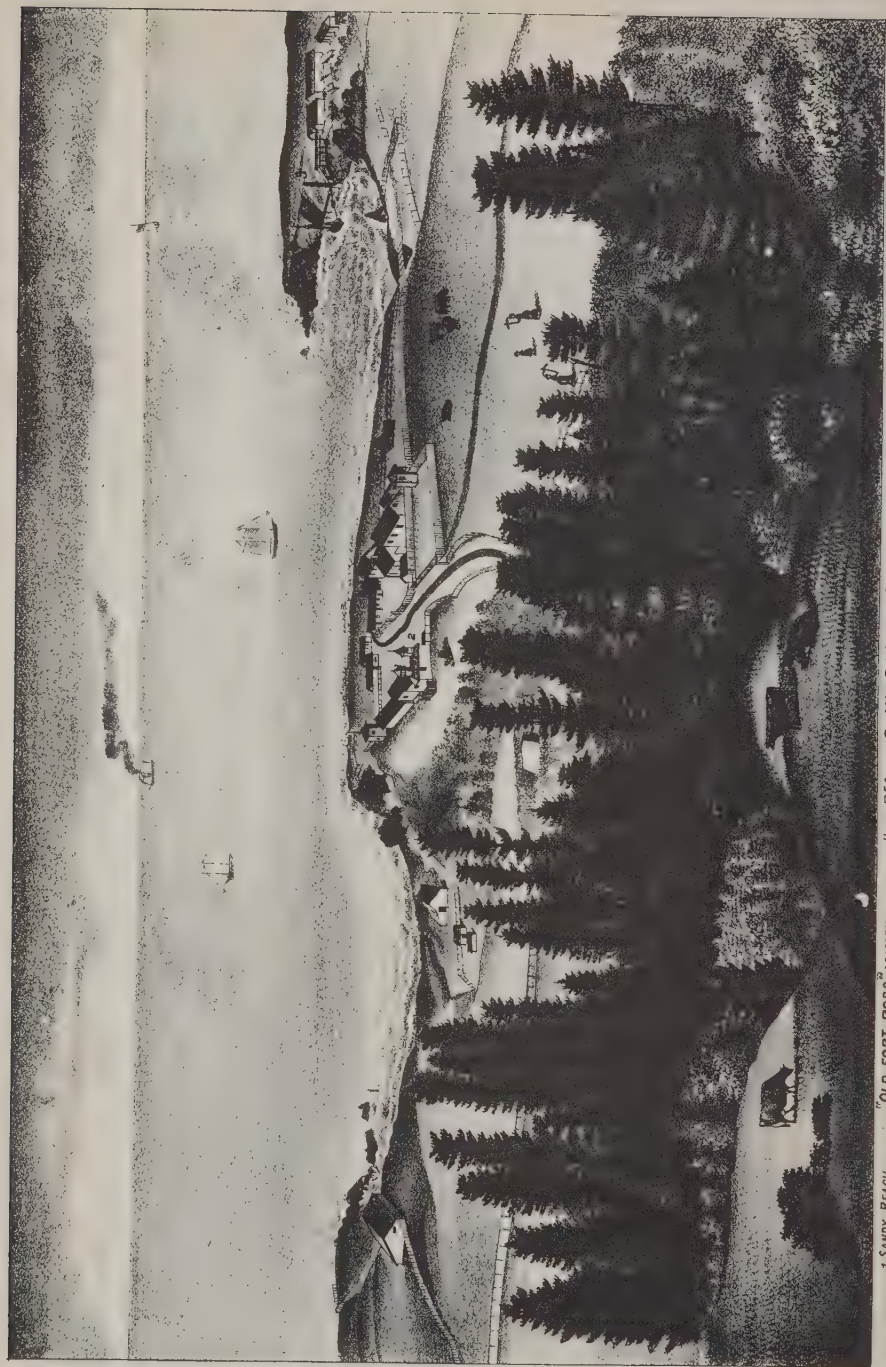
In his *Reminiscences*, dictated to Bancroft in 1877, Sutter painted a colorful picture of the episode and seemed to have quite forgotten that more than three months were to pass before the formal contract was executed. Sutter was empowered however to take immediate possession of the livestock and perhaps other movable property and this he lost no time in doing. He formally notified Vallejo on the 19th of September that he had bought "all the movable and fixed property" of the Russians and that he intended sending some men overland to Fort Ross to "embark" furniture, etc. He requested the courtesy of Vallejo's permission for these men to pass over his domain and concluded with "the sincere expression" of his respect. It is not unlikely that the exuberant Sutter thoroughly enjoyed writing this letter to the *Comandante General* (Document XX).

In a postscript to a letter written on December 8, Sutter thanked Vallejo for his assistance and advice to the men driving the livestock to Sutter's Fort (Document XXI). The Sonoma magnate had seemingly accepted the situation in a thoroughly sportsmanlike manner. Nevertheless he wrote to the Mexican Minister of War and Marine on December 12 that he had refused the Russian offer as "impertinent" but that Sutter had purchased for 30,000 pesos "all cattle and real property at Ross, Bodega, and the other places that the Russians occupied and *continue to occupy*." He criticized Sutter's activities at Bodega, sounded a warning note regarding the movements of the Hudson's Bay Company, and expressed apprehension at the continued presence of the Russians and their "noisy statements" (Document XXII).

On December 12, 1841, Rotcheff at Fort Ross drew up a bill of sale in which he made declaration as commander of Fort Ross that all the Russian properties both real and personal had been ceded by the Russian American Company to "M. le Capitaine Sutter" for thirty thousand dollars. Just what occasioned this action we have no means of determining. It may have been obligingly taken at the solicitation of Sutter, who perhaps thought it would be of some future value to him. At any rate, it held no important legal significance, as Rotcheff was not vested with any authority in the matter of the transfer (Document XXIII).

On the following day, December 13, the contract of sale was duly executed at Yerba Buena. It was signed by the contracting parties, Kostromitinoff and Sutter, and witnessed by Francisco Guerrero, J. J. Vioget and Jacob Leese. Under the terms Sutter bound himself to pay the sum of \$30,000 "within four years counting from the year 1842," payments to be made in produce during the first and second years in the amount of \$5,000 each; in the third year, \$10,000, and in the fourth year \$10,000 in coin. It is expressly stated in article 1 that the purchase did not include the land (Document XXIV).

On December 19 Kostromitinoff officially advised Governor Alvarado of the transfer to Sutter and mentioned that Alvarado had personally assured him on the occasion of his call at Monterey that he would not interfere with any sale that might be made. In the body of the letter he included a copy of Article 9 of the contract in which the mortgage of all Sutter's properties was accepted as security for payments by himself or, in the event of his prior death, by his heirs. In clos-



1. SANDY BEACH.

"OLD FORT ROSS," AS SEEN FROM THE HILL, PES. OF G. W. CALL, SONOMA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA. 3. FORT ROSS LANDING.

(View of Fort Ross from New Historical Atlas of Sonoma County, California)

ing, he announced the departure of the Russian "employees and inhabitants" (Document XXV).

A number of descriptions of Fort Ross are available. The appended brief description of Ross and Bodega by the young Frenchman, Eugene Dufflot de Mofras, is included because it was contemporary (Document XXVI). The inventory accompanying the proposal to Vallejo should meet the demands of the stickler for details.

Sir George Simpson, visiting California on his "journey round the world" in 1841 and 1842, commented rather acidly upon the sale to the "Swiss adventurer" and remarked on the withdrawal of all the Russians from the country (Document XXVII).

So ended the thirty years of Russian occupation of a section of California. Henceforth until 1867 the standards of the Tsar waved northward of 54° and 40' and thereafter nowhere in the western hemisphere.

CLARENCE JOHN DU FOUR.

DOCUMENTARY APPENDIX

I

OFFER OF RUSSIAN POSSESSIONS IN CALIFORNIA TO HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY
(Douglas, Sir James, Journal, MS, 16, Bancroft Library. April, 1840.)

They wish to sell Bodega for \$30,000. with a stock of 1500 Sheep at \$1½ 2000 neats and 1000 Horses & mules at 40/. ea with improved land fenced in with Barns. threshing floor &c sufficient to raise 3000 fanega's of wheat They of course can not sell the soil but merely the improvements; which we can hold only through a native. To write to Mr M'Loughlin on this subject, so that he may write to Mr Etoline in reply in the autumn. by the Steam Vessel on the subject of this property. or appoint an agent to settle with the commandant at Bodega

II

VALLEJO TO MINISTER OF WAR AND MARINE

(Vallejo, M. G., *Documentos*, MS, X, 2, Bancroft Library. Original in Spanish. Sonoma, January 1, 1841.)

Commandancy General of Alta California.
Most Excellent Sir.

In a separate official letter of this date I bring to the superior knowledge of Your Excellency that the Russians are going to evacuate the establishments of Ross and Bodega which they have possessed for twenty-five years through an imposition, waving over their fortifications the colors of their empire, and caus-

ing a thousand fears to this Commandancy General by their known ambition. In the said communication the antecedents which preceded them are stated, and I beg that Your Excellency will approve of the means that are being taken with respect to that settlement and port of Bodega, both of which need a respectable garrison for their safety. Ross is distant from this settlement of Sonoma 21 leagues to the west, and the port of Bodega 14. The former contains a considerable number of fine frame houses, large windmills, orchards, etc., without counting the barracks, warehouses, military Comandancia, and other establishments of importance. Bodega has an excellent storehouse and other houses for storage until the arrival of their barks.

It would be a great advantage, Most Excellent Sir, to have a colony at those points, or at least that there should be stationed there the fixed company of cavalry which I have solicited for this frontier, with the object of covering that point with the married soldiers, and not leave exposed to the weather and in danger such important things. In making to Your Excellency these suggestions, which I believe it to be my duty to set forth, I have the honor, etc. God and liberty. Sonoma, January 1, 1841.

MARIANO G. VALLEJO.

Most Excellent Minister of War and Marine

III

VALLEJO TO MINISTER OF WAR AND MARINE

(Vallejo, *Documentos*, X, 3. Original in Spanish. Sonoma, January 1, 1841.)

Most Excellent Sir:

I enclose to Your Excellency a copy of the communications passed between this Commandancy General and Señor D. J. Koupreanoff, Colonel of the Imperial Guard of Russia. They will inform Your Excellency of the occurrences which took place in the port of Bodega during the last year, origin of the controversy stirred up by Señor Koupreanoff. The result of it all is that the Russians are going to evacuate this year the establishments of Ross and Bodega, for which end they are concluding all their business pending in this Department, and have begun to put on sale all the chattels, buildings, etc. They have asked this Commandancy General for information as to whether they can sell all the buildings composing the settlement and those of the adjacent ranchos, to an individual, as well as their movable property. The reply has been given to the acting governor, Don Pedro Costromitinoff that "the Government of the nation has the first right." This reply has been founded on the fact that in this country there is no person whatever who can make the purchase referred to; and it is probable that some foreigners from Columbia might make a bid, and it is not to the advantage of the national interests that this portion of the Mexican territory shall again be in danger under a strange flag, as we saw for many years waving inside of its boundaries.

If foreign merchants make the purchase they may perhaps intend to become naturalized in this country, which they might accomplish very easily; but it is necessary to be alert in regard to them, for their intentions are known in regard

to this frontier and the port of San Francisco. The abandonment of the port of Bodega by the Russians is a new encouragement for their purposes. I very especially call the attention of Your Excellency and the Government to this point.

The Russians consider that their business will be concluded by next May, and I have been under the necessity of telling them that before that date I shall have solicited instructions from the Superior Government and will reply to their proposals. This, Most Excellent Sir, is the object of this communication which I respectfully direct to Your Excellency, so that you may be pleased to bring it to the knowledge of His Excellency the President of the Republic, begging that you will accept the most sincere protestations of my consideration and respect.

God and liberty, Sonoma, January 1, 1841.

His Excellency the Minister of War and Marine

MARIANO G. VALLEJO.

IV

KOSTROMITINOFF TO VALLEJO

(Vallejo, *Documentos*, X, 60. Original in Spanish.)

Yerba Buena, February 16, 1841

Señor Don M. G. Vallejo.

My dear and respected Sir:

Desiring to know before my departure from the Port of San Francisco whether you wish to purchase some articles destined to be sold at the Presidio of Ross, I am pleased to inform you that all the houses at Ross and the ranchos are to be put on sale in the present list: two windmills, two handmills, one tannery, ploughs for working the ground, riding saddles, a machine for cleaning wheat, one for blowing it, about 2000 head of domestic cattle of which 800 are tame cows, nearly 800 horses, and 1000 sheep. It is understood that these properties must be sold for what they will bring (all together), and with that understanding I am putting a very reasonable price on them, which is 30,000 pesos. Payment must be made either entirely in silver coin or entirely in warrants of the Hudson Bay Company; or, half in warrants of the said company and the other half in products of the country according to current prices, conducted and delivered at Yerba Buena. Also there is to be sold a covered launch of 25 tons, very suitable for the coasting trade.

In case you should consent to enter into direct dealings concerning these matters, do me the favor to reply as soon as possible, for the reason that the Russian ship has now finished its business and is ready to return to Sitka.

Please accept the assurances of my appreciation and respect.

PEDRO KOSTROMITINOFF

Agent of the Russian American Company.

V

VALLEJO TO KOSTROMITINOFF

(Vallejo, *Documentos*, X, 62. Original in Spanish.)

S. Rafael, February 19, 1841

Señor Don Pedro Kostromitinoff

My dear and respected Sir:

In order to accept the proposals which you make me in your appreciated letter of the 16th of the current month in regard to the sale of some articles of the presidio of Ross in the terms which you solicit, it has been necessary to undertake negotiation with the Governor of Columbia, and as it may be necessary to first obtain his consent, for that reason I am under the necessity of informing you that in the matter of the warrants for half of the thirty thousand pesos which you wish against the Hudson Bay Company I am under the necessity of awaiting the return of the first ship, which will be in July or August at the furthest, for by it I expect an answer regarding the matter.

In regard to the fifteen thousand pesos receivable in products of the country at Yerba Buena, I only require that the time shall be designated in which they are to be paid, and if the time that you designate is convenient and long enough for me, I have no objection to accepting the proposal made in this respect, expecting that in case it is accepted on your part you will inform me in good time. I infer that the launch which you mention is included in the same arrangement.

I hold some warrants drawn against the agent of the Hudson Bay Company in Sanduwich, and if it suits you to accept them for some articles for which I have immediate need please let me know.

Have the goodness to accept the renewed expressions of my respect and particular appreciation.

VI

PRESIDENT OF MEXICO (BY SECRETARY) TO ALVARADO, GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA
(Archives of California, Superior Government State Papers, decrees and
dispatches, MS, XVI, 16-18, Bancroft Library. Original in Spanish.
Mexico, March 11, 1841.)

His Excellency the President of the Republic, having been informed of the note from Your Excellency in which you insert notice of the resolution taken by the government of His Majesty the emperor of Russia to abandon the establishment of Ross founded in the territory of Alta California, has decided that a reply be sent to you directing you to proceed immediately to take possession of that part of the territory of the Republic; and that if it is impossible for you to do this yourself you shall do it through a commissioner of absolute confidence for his honor, ability, judgment, and good manners, to whom in accordance with that instruction you will give those which the circumstances may demand: and that the departmental *junta* shall immediately decide whether in the said territory there shall be placed a district capital, or whether it shall be joined to one of

those already established, according to what actual circumstances may demand: and that there shall be named for the same territory, in accordance with the laws, a prefect or sub-prefect: and in the first two cases in addition to the legal qualities he shall unite those of probity, discretion and the rest that may be necessary in view of the character and customs of those inhabitants: and that if any of the foreigners wish to return to their own country they shall not be prevented in any manner whatever: at the same time any honorable and industrious persons who may resolve to remain in our territory are to be informed that they are to be subject to the constitution and laws of the Republic: to this end there must be published and circulated without delay the accompanying copies: and all the inhabitants of the new district shall receive with all possible solemnity the required oath to observe the constitution and laws in so far as applies to each person: that from among the Mexicans who now live there or may come there to live, shall be chosen, in conformity with Article 1 of the first constitutional law, the justices of the peace that may be necessary, in conformity with the law of the 20th of March, 1837; that efforts shall be made to attract by kindness and friendly treatment honest and industrious foreigners, with the object that they shall become naturalized in the country, not forgetting in this case the requirements established by the laws: that there shall be made an accurate and detailed examination of the extent of the territory—its boundaries, productions, settlement, number of inhabitants of both sexes, with distinction between foreigners and Mexicans, with their ages and offices or occupations: clear and minute information shall be taken of the manner in which the inhabitants of the establishment have been governed, what have been their customs, civil, political, moral, and religious, as well as their education and manner of domestic life, and their inclinations and dominant passions: and that at the same time a report shall be made to this Ministry in regard to the true causes which have influenced his Majesty the Emperor of Russia to abandon the establishment, to ascertain whether there is in it any particular purpose on the part of that nation or of any other. The communications that may be made to the Supreme Government, not only on this point but on any other, must come entire, without lacking any document whatever, no matter how superfluous it may appear to be. If there should not be in the aforesaid district the necessary elements to form settlements an effort should be made to remove its inhabitants to fertile lands in the interior of the country. Finally, Your Excellency will, in union and harmony with the departmental *junta* and *comandante general*, dictate any other measures that the case may require and may be esteemed necessary for the better organization of the territory, the security of the frontiers, and the well-being of its inhabitants.

VII

KOSTROMITINOFF TO VALLEJO

(Vallejo, *Documentos*, X, 205. Original in Spanish.)

Señor Don M. Guadalupe Vallejo.

Bodega July 17, 1841.

My appreciated and respected Sir:

Having the pleasure of informing you of my arrival at the Port of Bodega on the 15th of the current month on the bark of the Russian American Company called *Helena*, I take advantage of this occasion to assure you of my consideration and friendship.

P. KOSTROMITINOFF

Agent of the Russian American Company.

VIII

ROTCHEFF TO SUTTER

(Veritas, *Examination of the Russian Grant from A. Rotcheff to John A. Sutter in 1841*, Sacramento, 1860, pp. 9-10.)

Yerba Buena, July 26, 1841.

Monsieur—Mr. Kostrometinoff, the agent of the Russian American Company, has arrived on these coasts, and being at Ross has charged me to inform you, that the decision of the Governor of the Russian colonies in America, has not been in your favor, since you have not the intention of buying the *real estate*, as well as personal property belonging to Ross, but merely the cattle, whilst the agent of the Company, Mr. Kostrometinoff, has found wholesale purchasers, that is to say, for the houses, the *ranches*, and the cattle. The making known to you these measures, you can no longer count upon purchasing the properties enumerated, for the said reasons.

Your very humble servant,

A. ROTSCHEFF.

IX

VALLEJO TO ALVARADO

(Vallejo, *Documentos*, X, 227. Original in Spanish.)

Sonoma, July 27, 1841

My dear Bautista:

The news I am going to give you is too good for me not to be persuaded that you will share my rejoicing.

The Russians are going at last. They are going and Cape Mendocino will now truly be the northern boundary of the Californias, for although the geography said so, our jurisdiction did not pass American Creek.

Don Pedro Kostromitinoff came to make me offers to sell me the settlement and in the inventory that he brought me he included even the acres of ground

that Ross, Bodega, and the neighboring ranches contain. You will find out about everything upon your arrival, for I firmly believe that you will be convinced now that your presence here is imperative and will hasten your coming so that we may unite in giving these neighbors of ours *bon voyage*. About a month ago when Don Pedro came I was in bed, but his arrival was a more efficacious remedy than the science of Aesculapius, Hippocrates, and Gallian, for I sat up in bed and I can now take walks about my room.

You know that we all have our bit of self-esteem, and it is with not a little complacency that I see Sonoma come to the fore and on the eve of being of considerable importance, because you are not ignorant of what it has cost me to attract a town here and organize somewhat a country formerly barren and uncultivated. Add to this the departure of the Russians and the union of Ross and Bodega to this frontier and you will know that I have secured a triumph. There is nothing left now but to agree on the constitutional organization, which we will do together, and all my desires will be consummated.

I urge upon you the prompt dispatch of this messenger because the Russian frigate *Helena* is at Bodega waiting for Don Pedro, he is waiting for me here, and I am waiting for you to conclude an affair so interesting to us as Californians and as Mexicans.

By the return of the messenger you are to tell me who are the persons who are coming with you so I can provide lodging, and the exact day on which you expect to be in San Francisco so that I can have ready the means of transportation that you need and be prepared to receive you.

X

KOSTROMITINOFF TO VALLEJO

Offer for sale (undated and unsigned) of all Russian properties in California as described in attached inventories.

(Vallejo, *Documentos*, X, 229. Original in Spanish.)

The undersigned: Agent of the Russian American Company, Don Pedro Kostromitinoff, and the Commandant General, Don M. Guadalupe Vallejo, having made preliminary arrangements signed the following articles:

I. The Russian American Company, evacuating Ross with the approval of His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, cedes its rights to Mr. M. G. Vallejo over all settlements and farms on the coast of New Albion at the port of Bodega, and to the North at the presidio of Ross according to the inventory arranged and signed by both individuals entering into the treaty.

II. It is agreed that as the price of all the settlements which the Russian American Company cedes to Mr. M. G. Vallejo he shall pay within the interval of three years counting from the year 1841.

III. The payment of the said shall be made by drafts on the English Hudson Bay Company.

IV. If perhaps for unforeseen reasons Don G. Vallejo can not pay the total in drafts on the Hudson Bay Company, he shall pay at least half in drafts on that company and half in products of the country according to the prices set below.

V. Mr. G. Vallejo binds himself to provide products according to the following prices within the period of Art. II.

- 6,000 fanegas of wheat at 2 pesos
- 300 fanegas of peas at 2 pesos
- 400 arrobas of soap at $3\frac{1}{2}$ pesos
- 700 arrobas of tallow at $1\frac{1}{2}$ pesos
- 400 arrobas of suet at 2 pesos

It is understood that all these products are to be of the best quality:—wheat and peas are not to be stale, the soap is to be dry, the tallow and suet—clean— $5\frac{1}{2}$ Spanish arrobas to the fanega.

VI. Mr. M. G. Vallejo binds himself to fulfill the payment in drafts of the English Hudson Bay Company in the currency of the year 1841. Half of the produce should be ready for the 1st of August, 1842. The other half or the rest of the payment mentioned in Art. II should be made by the 1st of August, 1842 [sic. should read 1843 or 1844].

VII. It is agreed that the Russian American Company shall send its boats to the port of San Francisco for the produce during the period set in article VI and Mr. G. Vallejo is to take the measures necessary for loading the produce prepared immediately on the arrival of the boat so as not to lose time in vain.

VIII. If because of failure of the crops they are not ready at the time of the arrival of the boat at the appointed time and the above mentioned boat should be obliged to return without a cargo, Mr. M. G. Vallejo shall take charge without question of the expenses of the boat from Sitka to San Francisco, that is the expenses of the crew and freight.

IX. The boats of the Russian American Company, sent for the produce as mentioned in article V, shall enter without the payment of duties and tonnage. On its part, the Russian American Company binds itself to adopt means so that articles of commerce shall not be brought in the Russian boats for trading with the inhabitants of the country. However, in case that some debtor wishes to pay his debt with produce, the authorities shall not prevent him.

X. The Russian American Company is entirely convinced of Mr. Vallejo's promptness in payment, but to bind the contract and for unexpected events, up to the time of the payment of the total mentioned in Art. II, the estates at Ross with the port of Bodega (or whatever name they are called in the future) with everything that is in the inventory, signed by both parties to the bargain, shall remain a guarantee, so that if the payment is not completed the Russian American Company shall enter again into its proprietary rights and Mr. M. G. Vallejo shall return everything faithfully according to the inventory. In this case the same condition is to be extended to Mr. M. G. Vallejo's heirs in case of his death, that is before the completion of the present contract and in case the said heirs shall not complete the payment mentioned in Art. II.

X [sic]. It is agreed that if in case of war between Russia and some other nation the Republic joins the enemies of the Russian Empire, the sanctity of the present contract is to be inviolable,—and the period set for the arrival of the boats is the only thing susceptible to change, it being supposed that the above mentioned boats would not be able to remain in safety.

XII. It is agreed that this contract shall be presented for the ratification of the Government of California and in conformity with the laws of the Republic shall be retained in the possession of the Russian American Company.

And that this may stand for all time and have full force, we set the signatures and seals of both the contractors.

REAL ESTATE

The estates are: (A) at Fort Ross, (B) Costromitinoff Ranch, (C) Chlebnikoff Ranch (Basil), (D) Gorgy Ranch, and (E) at Bodega.

(A) FORT ROSS

Square fort, made of planks, 1032 feet in circumference, 12 feet high; it has two turrets at the angles.

IN THE FORT ARE:

Commandant's house (old) made of thick wood, 48 ft. long, 36 ft. wide, roofed with double boards. It contains six rooms, a corridor and kitchen.

Commandant's house (new) made of thick wood, 48 ft. long, 24 ft. wide, contains 6 rooms and a corridor.

Commissioned Officers' house of ten rooms, two corridors; 60 ft. long and 21 ft. wide.

Barracks of eight rooms, two corridors, 48 ft. long, 24 ft. wide.

Warehouse (old) two stories, 48 ft. long, 24 wide, has an open gallery with pillars.

Warehouse (new) of thick planks, 42 ft. long, 24 ft. wide.

Kitchen (new) 24 ft. long, 21 ft. wide.

Warehouse for food supplies of thick planks, 48 ft. long, 18 ft. wide; a prison here.

Chapel with cupolas, 36 ft. long, 24 ft. wide; a bell tower here.

Well 15 ft. deep.

OUTSIDE THE FORT AT THE FOOT OF THE HILL:

A forge, anvil, and shop for a blacksmith, of thick wood, 33 ft. long, 18 ft. wide.

Tanning shop 30 ft. long, 18 ft. wide; here a machine to compress tanned hides.

Bathhouse for troops, 18 ft. long, 15 ft. wide.

Shop for coopers, 60 ft. long, 30 ft. wide.

Shed for the fishing boats, on rafters; 60 ft. long, 30 ft. wide.

IN THE VICINITY OF THE FORT:

Barracks kitchen, a bakeshop here, 30 ft. long, 18 ft. wide.

Two cattle barns of thick planks, 120 ft. long, 21 ft. wide; here a corral 168 ft. long, 120 ft. wide.

8 sheds, 8 pools, and ten kitchens.

The houses have plank roofs, windows with glass, and wooden floors.

WITHIN 5000 FEET OF THE PRESIDIO ARE:

Wooden threshing floor with floor of planks, 60 ft. in diameter; here a shed 30 ft. long, 15 ft. wide.

Orchard with fruit trees: 330 ft. long, 144 ft. wide.

It has more than 260 fruit trees

207 apple trees

29 peach trees

10 pear trees

10 quince trees

8 cherry trees

also some vines.

The orchard has a new house with 4 rooms, 27 ft. long, 24 ft. wide, roofed with planks; here a kitchen 15 ft.

Nearby there is a little orchard, 84 ft. long, 63 ft. wide; this orchard has more than 20 fruit trees, and also some vines.

Ross has about 70 acres of cultivated land, which are enough [to raise] 175 fanegas of crops.

The larger part of this land is fenced. The fort has a vegetable garden, 420 ft. long, 120 ft. wide; here is hot bed.

(B) COSTROMITINOFF RANCH

Barracks, 48 ft. long, 18 ft. wide, roofed with planks; it has three rooms and two corridors with roofs.

Warehouse, 42 ft. long, 18 wide, roofed with planks; of wood for washing wheat in the river.

House, 18 ft. long, 12 ft. wide.

Two threshing floors, one 60 ft., the other 48 ft. in diameter; it has a floor of planks and walls of boards.

Floor for winnowing wheat, 12 ft., made of thick wood and beams.

House for Indians, made of planks, 42 ft. long, 15 ft. wide.

Kitchen with two ovens, # ft.

Bathhouse of planks, roofed, 18 ft. long, 12 ft. wide.

A *boat* to travel on the Slavianca (Russian) river.

The ranch has about 100 acres of cultivated land, which is sufficient for 250 fanegas of wheat.

A *corral*.

(C) CHLEBNICOFF RANCH

Adobe house, which has three chambers, 21 ft. long, 15 ft. wide, roofed with lapped boards, here a sun dial.

Barracks, 60 ft. long, 21 ft. wide, has three divisions, roofed with boards.

Warehouse, 45 ft. long, 21 ft. wide, the floor of wood.

Wooden floor, large, 72 ft. in diameter; the floor of planks.

Kitchen, bread oven, and forge, 36 ft. long, 15 ft. wide.

Bath house, 21 ft. long, 12 wide.

4 *houses* of various sizes; 1 for food supplies, 2 for Indians and one for tobacco.

Mill worked by horses with one stone; can grind 4 fanegas.

A corral.

There is sufficient farming land here, suitable for beans, corn, tobacco, etc., etc., etc.

(D) TSCHERNICH RANCH (D. GORGY)

Barracks with 6 rooms, 42 ft. long, 18 ft. wide.

Kitchen, 24 ft. long, 12 ft. wide.

Bath house, 18 ft. long, 12 ft. wide.

Warehouse for supplies, 42 ft. long, 18 ft. wide.

Floor for winnowing wheat, of planks, 108 ft.

Two houses for supplies.

Two hot beds.

Vineyard with 2000 plants and some fruit trees.

The cultivated land is enclosed; there is enough to sow 50 fanegas. The larger part of the land is suitable for corn, beans, onions, chili, etc.

(E) BODEGA

Warehouse, 60 ft. long, 30 ft. wide; quite suitable for dry goods and some food supplies.

House, 18 ft., with four rooms and a stove.

Bath house, 24 ft. long, 12 ft. wide.

Corral.

A boat.

There are also here:

A house with a stove, 12 ft. long.

A large corral.

A hut and corral where the drove of horses is pastured.

A 20 ton launch, excellent for the coast.

A four oars boat.

CHATELS

Farm Machinery

Steel machine for cleaning wheat.

Rake with steel teeth.

26 horse plows.

19 ox ditto.

2 native ditto.

19 rakes with iron teeth.

10 ditto with wooden teeth.

25 harnesses for horses.

18 ditto for oxen.

15 halters.

20 reins.

5 carts with 4 wheels.

10 ditto with 2 wheels.

CATTLE

The settlement has 1700

Head of cattle:

Oxen	70
For slaughter.....	174
Small	111
	355
Full grown cows.....	777
Half grown ditto.....	409
Small ditto.....	159
	1345

There are 1700 head.

Horses and mules—940 head:

Large mules.....	55
Stallion asses.....	20
Ditto, half grown.....	30
Ditto, small.....	50
Large mares.....	320
Ditto, half grown.....	70
Ditto, small.....	90
Horses	305
	940

In this number there are 100 plow horses and 20 pack mules.

Sheep 900 head:

Large sheep.....	100
Ditto, small.....	35
Large ewes.....	540
Ditto, half grown.....	217
Ditto, small.....	8
	900

In all, 3,540 head.

XI

ALVARADO TO VALLEJO

(Vallejo, *Documentos*, X, 236. Original in Spanish.)

Monterey, July 29, 1841.

My esteemed Uncle:

It is not without regret that I take up my pen to answer your valued letter of the 27th of the current month, by telling you that it is impossible for me to go to that

point as soon as you said because my health is badly broken, to such an extent that within a few days perhaps I shall be obliged to relieve myself for some time of public affairs, in order to devote myself to taking exercise and seek a change of climate for the season has now arrived in which I have suffered serious attacks.

I am full of the same sentiments as yourself in respect to the usurpation of the Russians and the dangers we have run during their stay in Ross, such an interesting part of our country, and I enjoy now an ineffable pleasure when I see their approaching departure, but it is not yet time to take any steps towards taking possession of the territory, for in one of the communications from the Ministry that I sent to you it reminds me that for this business I must wait for the advices which the Governor of Sitka promised to give to the Governor of the Department.

Don Pedro wrote to me some time ago proposing the sale of the effects of the establishment, and I had time to consult about this in a confidential letter to His Excellency the President, but he did not reply to me, and I only received through the Ministry of Communications, official letters which you must have seen. I therefore wrote to Don Pedro and told him that no arrangement could be entered into on the part of the government, but notwithstanding this resolution I indicated that I was particularly interested in the purchase of a launch which appeared in the inventory, but the said *señor* did not give me any reply, and now I have changed my mind so much about the purchase of the said launch that I shall do nothing further about this matter; for in respect to my private business I have thought of the great advantages that would result from the purchase of a brigantine in the United States. For this undertaking I count upon Cooper and my Uncle José de Jesus, who has indicated to me that you would take a part in this. I would desire that, for it is necessary to have some partners capable of forming a company and a sufficient capital. Therefore, if you are thinking of making a proposal for the properties at Ross, it cannot be done on account of the government nor is it proper for you or me (in my opinion) to take this step, that is, speaking of our private interests.

Speaking now with respect to the country, [let us wait] until they abandon it, and take it afterwards, for the government has not wished to authorize me to engage in any disagreements with them and even in order to see each other some days must pass, since you must always be in Sonoma.

A Mexican schooner arrived here, bringing Graham and some fifteen Englishmen, some of those whom I sent to San Blas, with letters from the government pledging them against all intention of leaving here. 40 of them dispersed.

Of Señor Castro nothing is known except that he is in Mexico, and that he is coming back by land, but we have not received any letter from him.

The bishop is also coming by land to visit the missions of Lower California. They say troops are coming, but I doubt it, for the government should give advance information of this.

I wish you all happiness in union with your family, and I remain as always your affectionate nephew,

J. B. ALVARADO.

XII

VALLEJO TO KOSTROMITINOFF

Offer to purchase the livestock of the Russians (undated and unsigned)
(Vallejo, *Documentos*, X, 228. Original in Spanish.)

The undersigned, the agent named by the Governor of the Russian American colonies, Don Pedro Kostromitinoff, and Don Mariano G. Vallejo, in virtue of previous verbal and written consultations, have agreed upon the following articles:

1. The first named, in pursuance of the powers conferred upon him sells to the second, and will immediately deliver, the cattle, horses, and sheep existing at Ross and the ranchos dependent upon the same establishment, on the following terms:

Cattle			
1021 heads of large cattle.....	at \$4.00		\$4084
409 ditto medium-sized.....	" 3.00		1227
270 ditto small.....	" 1.00		0270
Horses and mules			
20 Jacks	" 5.		0100
30 ditto medium sized.....	" 3.		0090
50 Colts	" 1.		0050
320 Mares	" 1.4		0480
70 ditto medium sized.....	" 1.2		0087.4
90 Fillies	" 1.		0090
			6478.4
Carried forward.....			6478.4
305 horses	" 5.		1525
900	" .60		675
55 mules	" 8.		440
			9118.4

2d. The buyer obligates himself to pay the seller the sum of 9000 pesos, by which the aforesaid sum of 9,118 will be liquidated, payment to be made in the following manner:

\$4500 in warrants of the Hudson Bay Company, on condition that on the first arrival of Señor Douglass he shall deliver the letters of exchange for which he made himself liable in the previous consultations already cited.

The other half, or \$4500, will be delivered to the seller or to his order in

Wheat at.....	\$2.
Chicano at.....	2.
Soap (arroba) at.....	3.4
Tallow at.....	1.4
Lard at.....	2.

The said products will be delivered in the proportions asked for by the seller until the \$4450 [sic] above cited are completed, at any time in the coming year,

and if, through unforeseen circumstances the warrants above mentioned do not arrive, the \$4450 [sic] remaining will be paid in the same terms, in products like the first, in the year 1843.

Señor Don M. G. Vallejo obligates himself to pay the \$9000, half in products during the whole year of 1842, and the rest in 1843.

QUALITY AND PRICE OF THE PRODUCTS

3d. The seller formally obligates himself to accept the total or balance of the aforesaid sum of \$9000 in silver coin, on condition that if at the expiration of the time stipulated there is not enough the buyer may offer the whole or part of it in the indicated products, without any reclamation of damages, prejudices, or losses, nor shall he compel the purchaser to deliver to him the said products.

4th. For the fulfillment of the obligations of the buyer, he shall pledge as security his property, present and future, and shall submit to the laws which may favor the seller against him.

Done at Sonoma, etc.

XIII

SUTTER TO SUÑOL

(Sutter-Suñol Correspondence, MS, California State Library. Original in French.)
Nueva Helvetia, August 10, 1841.

Mr. Antoine Sunol at the Pueblo.

Sir:

I take this opportunity of telling you that my launch will be at the pueblo in twelve or fifteen days. If you could secure for me some dried meat I should be very greatly obliged to you; will you be so kind as to send me at the same time the engine which is needed at the distillery.

The Russian gentlemen have found buyers for all of their houses and ranches, a fact which pleases me not at all. In the meanwhile, you can get an insight into the character of the Russians. They spoke very loud of preferring to burn all the houses before selling them to a local man, especially to Mr. Vallejo who had insulted the Russian flag, etc., etc., and now, just to get a few thousands of piastres more, they are not ashamed to make arrangements like this one. Nobody but a Russian would act like that. I would much rather they had not made any deals with me.

Please accept, Sir, my sincere salutations.

Your quite devoted

J. A. SUTTER.
(Rubric)

P. S. If I get any information about your horses, you may be sure that I shall go and get them.

XIV

VALLEJO TO ALVARADO

(Vallejo, *Documentos*, IX, 249. Original in Spanish. Sonoma, August 11, 1841.)

Department of Commandancy General

Excellent Sir:

Referring to the *unanswered* official note which on the date of the 27th of last month I directed to Your Excellency, I have the honor to inform you that Don Pedro Kostromitinoff, agent of the Governor of Sitka, is going to the Capital to confer with Your Excellency in regard to the evacuation of Ross, the said Señor, not being satisfied with the reasons which I alleged for not entering into a trade for the houses of Ross and its dependencies. Principal among my motives was that those buildings belonged by right to the government, on account of having been constructed on national ground and with materials from that same land. I objected, besides, that without an express order from the Superior Government I could not make any innovation in this respect for that would be transgressing the laws and my powers, insisting always upon the incontestable right that the Government had to the aforesaid buildings. Señor Kostromitinoff not being content, I repeat, with this statement of mine, he determined to go to the presence of Your Excellency to clear up the doubts which he retains concerning the alleged right of the Supreme Government.

Don Pedro has learned through irregular channels that the Superior order relating to this matter was in the possession of Your Excellency, and he is going to make sure of it.

I do not consider it necessary to communicate to Your Excellency my reflections on this interesting subject, being convinced that Your Excellency is as fully persuaded as I am that the Mexican nation could not, without loss to its dignity, buy what already unquestionably belongs to it.

God and liberty. Sonoma, August 11, 1841.

XV

ALVARADO TO VALLEJO

(Vallejo, *Documentos*. X, 246. Original in Spanish. Monterey, August 14, 1841.)

At this moment I received your note of the current month, in which, referring to that of the 27th of last month, you speak to me again concerning the evacuation of Ross by the Russians, and the proposals made to you by Señor Don Pedro Costromitinoff, agent of the governor of Sitka, in regard to the houses existing at that point.

I am in agreement with you that in the present circumstance of the abandonment of Ross by the Russians these buildings properly belong to the nation, for the reasons which you explain; but on the other hand I see that in spite of the justice of this view the buildings may be destroyed or burned by them. This conduct would be reprehensible to the whole civilized world, if after they had taken the riches of a great port on the coast, and after maintaining for so many years the best relations with the country and receiving every consideration from our gov-

ernments, they should commit this act of barbarism, giving to understand by this proceeding their ingratitude to the country which gave them hospitality.

I will place this before Señor Costromitinoff as soon as he approaches this government, and I will explain to him other reasons which may convince him of the justice of this government's stand. I will inform you immediately of the result, so that we may act in accord in this very important business. It is to be observed that in order to act in accordance with the desires of the Supreme Government in regard to the possession of Ross it is necessary to await the official advices which the first Russian agent who came to San Francisco with this object promised to give me.

Please accept my expressions of my attention and proper respect.

God and Liberty, Monterey, August 14, 1841.

JUAN B. ALVARADO

Señor Comandante-General of the Department.

XVI

KOSTROMITINOFF TO VALLEJO

(Vallejo, *Documentos*. X, 231. Original in Spanish.)

Rancho Chlebnikoff August 27, 1841

Señor Don M. G. Vallejo.

My dear and respected Sir:

In my last visit to Sonoma you informed me of unforeseen impediments which were the cause of your renunciation of the purchase of the immovable property at Ross; which obstacles consist of the fact that the Government of Mexico prohibits the sale of the said property. I had the honor to beg for the authentic act of the Mexican Government, but you replied that there is nothing official in your possession, and that the letter from Señor Alvarado was private, but that nevertheless the Señor Governor received the instructions from the Republic on this matter. Consequently it was indispensable for me to make a trip to Monterey in order to clear up the matter with the Governor. I now have the honor to inform you that he assured me he had never received such acts from the Mexican Government . . . but simply orders to await the time when we shall announce the evacuation of the establishment of Ross, and that up to that time it was his duty to maintain friendship between the Russians and those of the country,—without saying anything about the prohibition of making the sale of the immovable property, whether the evacuation might occur in one year or ten, or even a century. From all the above it is clear that there are no obstacles mentioned to the purchase of Ross, of which you will be more fully convinced by reading the letter from the Señor Governor which is enclosed with the present, and I hope that you will have the complacency to inform me promptly if you do not wish to act with the object of the purchase of Ross, in agreement with your first letter of February of the current year, for the reason that it is impossible for me to admit conditions which you communicated to me ultimately.

I desire your good health and I am your very obedient servant.

PEDRO KOSTROMITINOFF

XVII

VALLEJO TO KOSTROMITINOFF

(Vallejo, *Documentos*, X, 232. Original in Spanish.)

Sonoma, August 28, 1841.

Señor Don Pedro Kostromitinoff:

I have before me your letter of yesterday enclosing that of Señor Alvarado, both referring to the matter of the houses of Ross. The said letters are in agreement with each other and with what I told you when you were here; for I told you there was no document from the Supreme Government authorizing that of this Department, nor any individual in it, to make the purchase of the said properties, for which reasons I repeat *that it cannot be done*. The letter from Señor Alvarado of which you make use says: "Don Pedro begs me to give him a document authorizing them to sell the buildings only, but not the land, to an individual of the country, and my reply was what I ought to give, refusing openly such a proposal." He adds another paragraph "I must inform you that I cannot give any guaranty to either the buyer or seller of Ross, for I am subject only to the orders of the Government (speaking of the movable properties)." Finally he says: "And I am only waiting for advices from the Governor of Sitka that he has instructions from his Government, in order to occupy that point when I receive from the Governor of Sitka the advices that he is going to evacuate it."

By all the preceding you will be convinced of the impossibility in which I find myself of accepting the proposals which you made to me, or any other relative to the purchase of the houses; and I only insist upon those which I made you regarding the movable property, in case you should agree to them.

XVIII

OFFER OF JACOB LEESE

(Hittell, John S., *History of the City of San Francisco and Incidentally of the State of California*, San Francisco, 1878, p. 89.)

Mr. Leese proposed to give them twenty thousand dollars, five thousand dollars cash and five thousand annually for three years. General Sutter bid thirty thousand dollars, to be paid on time, and he obtained the bargain.

XIX

SUTTER TO SUÑOL

(Sutter-Suñol Correspondence. Original in French.)

Nueva Helvetia, September 1, 1841.

Mr. Antoine Suñol at the Pueblo of San Jose.

Sir:

I have just this minute received your esteemed letter of the 26th ult., with the still, twelve cheeses and some dried meat, part of which was left with the carpenter until next trip.

I thank you for your kindness in sending the letter for Mr. Sinclair to Monterey. He wrote to me that he had received it. I am sending you again two letters which I beg you to send as quickly as possible to Yerba Buena; these two letters are rather important. I suppose that Mr. Hernandez will take the letters to Yerba Buena, and I can pay him the first time that he comes here.

It seems that the Russian gentlemen cannot come to an agreement with Mr. Vallejo; they are renewing negotiations with me, but I shall be a little more exacting now.

The bearer of this letter is unable to go himself to Yerba Buena because he has to go to Mr. Gomez's ranch to help take in the cattle, the horses and the mares. I thank you very much for the onion seed and the books; these I shall return to you as soon as I read them. I cannot send the launch right away because it needs to be repaired. That is why I am sending the letters by land. The Count of Mofras arrived this evening to pay me a visit.

The American officers who are exploring the Sacramento River have also called on me; they are still in the upper waters of the river and will come to see me again upon their return. I am quite anxious to know all that they have discovered.

If you have the time, kindly give me your current account, if you please.

In the meanwhile, please accept my sincere and respectful salutations.

Your most devoted servant,

J. A. SUTTER
(Rubric)

P. S. My kindest regards to your family, if you please.

XX

SUTTER TO VALLEJO

(Vallejo, *Documentos*, X, 282. Original in Spanish. New Helvetia, September 19, 1841.)

Señor Don Guadalupe Vallejo

Commandant General of the Californias

My esteemed and honored sir:

Notice to you that I have bought all the movable and fixed property of the settlement of the Honorable Russian American Company at Ross and that I am going to send a party of men by land to that place for the embarking of the above mentioned furniture, &c. Please be kind enough to allow them to pass the frontier toward Ross and not to put any obstacle in their way.

Please accept, at the same time, the sincere expression of my respect, remaining as always

Your affectionate servant

J. A. SUTTER (Rubric)

New Helvetia, September 19, 1841.

XXI

SUTTER TO VALLEJO

(Vallejo, *Documentos*, X, 377. Original in Spanish.)

New Helvetia, December 8, 1841.

Señor Don M^o G^e VallejoCommandant General of
Alta California.

My esteemed sir!

I have the honor to present to you the letters of security for the three persons who came with this company from the Missouri in the United States of North America who had no passports from you.

All the other foreigners in my settlement have passports from the Government and the others have been in the country for many years.

Please send me the passports for them the same as the others have.

With the deepest respect I have the honor to remain your affectionat Servant,
J. A. SUTTER (Rubric)

P. S. I am very much obliged to you for the help and the good advice that you were kind enough to give my men when they passed by Sonoma with the animals, and if I can serve you in anything, please use freely.

The Same.

XXII

VALLEJO TO MINISTER OF WAR AND MARINE

(Bolton, H. E., Mexican Transcripts, MS, No. 69, Bancroft Library.

Original in Spanish. Sonoma, December 12, 1841.)

Most Excellent sir:

Under date of January 1st of the present year I had the honor to send your excellency an affidavit of the correspondence between the commandancy general and the ex-governor of the Russian American colonies, Colonel of the Imperial Guard, Don Juan Koopreeanoff, and likewise the notice that gentleman gave me that the Russians were going to evacuate the places that they were occupying on this coast. Since then the greater part of the Russians have left for Sitka, only a few remaining and Mr. Rotroheff, Commandant of Ross who has already sent his family and remained to sell the settlement. He made me some offers which I refused as impertinent, and sold it for thirty thousand pesos to Don J. A. Sutter, a Swiss by nation and the founder of the colony on the Sacramento river, including all cattle and real property at Ross, Bodega, and the other places that the Russians occupied and *continue to occupy*.

There is no store at Ross now; everything that was not bought by Mr. Sutter was sent to Sitka and that place, although barren, continues to keep the character of a Russian possession. The town of Bodega is in the same case and only the ranch at that place is occupied by the Russians who have not gone and by an employe of the above mentioned Sutter, who is planting at the latter's orders and performing other agricultural work to the harm and in violation of the rights of

the legitimate owner, Don Jaime McYntoch from whom the Russians usurped it.

If your excellency has not received the instructions that you requested upon sending the above mentioned communications, I have thought best to maintain the *statu quo* until receiving superior orders from the Supreme Government as to the manner of proceeding to the annexation of this part of the national territory, a thing which it might be desired should take place as soon as possible, for in my previously mentioned communications, I pointed out to your excellency the well founded fears that the British Cross might be substituted for the Russian two-headed eagle, and later events corroborate my suspicions if they do not confirm them. The men from the Columbia, that is the Hudson Bay Company, already have a foot in this country and have acquired a house and lot in the port of San Francisco and wanted to establish other houses at least in the principal places in California. Mr. Macayo, clerk of this same company, has secured from the Departmental government a considerable area of land on the vicinity of Mr. Sutter's settlement for the purpose of founding a colony.

This added to the noisy statements of the Russians makes me fear that if the Supreme Government does not take prompt and energetic measures it will put off, if it does not entirely destroy, the longed-for and glorious day of the first raising of the Mexican flag in those places which up to the present have been deprived of their proper member[ship].

God and Liberty, Sonoma, December 12, 1841.

MARIANO G. VALLEJO (Rubric)

To the Minister of War and Marine.

XXIII

ROTCHIEFF TO SUTTER

(Russian America, V, part 2, p. 29, Bancroft Library, Translation of extract of a letter of Captain Etholine to the Directors of the Russian American Company, dated at Fort Ross, December 12, 1841, and published in the *Journal of Manufactures and Trade*.)

Bill of Sale

Copy of Mr. Rotchieff's deed:

"I, the undersigned employee of the Government of the Russian Empire and Commandant of Fort Ross, on the coast of California, do by these presents certify that the establishment embracing on the North the land adjacent to Cape Mendocino, and on the South the land adjacent to Punta de los Reyes, or Cape Drake, and extending back from the shore three Spanish leagues, and of which property the Russian American Fur Company has had and held possession from the year 1812 to the year 1841, or for 29 years, has been ceded by said Company for the consideration of thirty thousand dollars to M. le Capitaine Sutter and delivered into his indisputable possession, with all the land, personal and other immovable property not here enumerated, said Company relying for their power and right in the premises upon the institution and spirit of the laws sanctified by

Spain and Mexico. The said transfer of the Establishment of Ross was effected during the time that I occupied the position of Commandant of the Establishment, and by my own free co-operation, this, the 12th of December, 1841."

ALEX. ROTCHEFF, *Commandant la forteresse Ross, sur les côtes de la Californie.*

XXIV

KOSTROMITINOFF TO SUTTER

(Castro, Manuel, *Documentos para la historia de California*, MS, I, 57-59,
Certified copy of copy. Original in French.)

Deed to Russian properties.

1841, San Francisco, December 13

The undersigned agent of the Russian-American Company, Mr. Pierre Kostromitinoff and the citizen of Alta California, Justice of Peace, Representative of the government on the Frontiers of the Sacramento River, Captain J. A. Sutter, in consequence of preliminary agreements have confirmed the following articles:

Art. 1. It is agreed that the Russian-American Company, abandoning Ross by the consent of his majesty, the Emperor of all the Russias, cedes to Mr. Sutter all its posts which are found on the shores of New Albion at Port Bodega and to the north of this port as far as Ross, except only the land in accord with the inventory, signed in due form by two persons mentioned above.

Art. 2. It is agreed that Mr. Sutter binds himself to pay the sum of thirty thousand dollars (*piastres*) within four years counting from the year of 1842, as the price of all these posts, ceded by the Russian-American Company.

Art. 3. It is agreed that the payment of the above-mentioned sum shall be made in the products of the country during the first and second years, to the sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000); the third year to the sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000); and the last, that is to say the fourth, in coin to the sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000).

Art. 4. It is agreed that Mr. Sutter shall provide during the period named (Art. 2) during the first two years produce of the country in the quantities below mentioned:

1000 <i>fanegas</i> (1600 bushels) of wheat.....	at	\$ 2	\$3200
100 <i>fanegas</i> of peas (160 bu.).....	"	2½	250
25 <i>fanegas</i> of beans (about 40 bu.).....	"	3	75
50 <i>quintales</i> of soap.....	"	14	700
200 <i>arrobas</i> of suet (5000 lb.).....	"	2	400
250 <i>arrobas</i> of tallow (6250 lbs.).....	"	1½	375
			\$5,000

The third year this amount should be doubled, that is to say, should be for the sum of \$10,000. It is understood that all these articles are to be of the best

quality; the wheat and the peas fresh, the soap dry, the suet and the tallow fresh and in good condition. Five and a half ($5\frac{1}{2}$) Spanish *arrobas* are to make a *fanega*.

Art. 5. It is agreed that Mr. Sutter is bound to pay the produce of the country for the three years on the first of September (new style) counting from 1842—the date fixed for the arrival of the company's ships at the port of San Francisco.

Art. 6. It is agreed that the Russian-American Company will send its ships to the port of San Francisco to receive the articles during the period fixed by art. 5. On the arrival of the ship Mr. Sutter shall make the necessary arrangements at his own expense to load the articles prepared so that the ship will not lose time.

Art. 7. It is agreed that if the cargo of articles is not ready on the arrival of the Company's ship at the time fixed, and the ship is obliged to return to Sitka without having received anything, Mr. Sutter takes charge without question of all the expenses that are caused by the ship from Sitka to the port of San Francisco, i.e., the cost of the crew and the freight, or in place of produce pay the sum which was to be paid that year in coin, according to art. 4.

Art. 8. It is agreed that the Russian-American Company's ships which come after the articles mentioned in art. 4. shall load without paying the duties and tonnage rates, and for this purpose Mr. Sutter will take the proper measures and will himself arrange matters with the custom house, i.e. Mr. Sutter will pay, if necessary, tonnage rates and harbor fees (?) according to the size of the ship.

Art. 9. It is agreed, although the Russian-American Company is fully convinced of Mr. Sutter's trustworthiness in paying, but to bind the agreement and in the event of any unexpected chance, that up to the payment of the sum mentioned his settlement on the Sacramento River, named New Helvetia and established with the consent of the government of California and in accord with legal acts, together with all his movable and fixed property, which is in that place, shall serve as a guarantee. In the same way all the buildings at Port Bodega and the Chlebnikoff and Tchernick ranches, which Mr. Sutter intends to leave untouched and in the possession [of the present tenants] shall serve as a guarantee in such a way that in case of the non-fulfillment of this agreement we may be able to enter into our rights of possession at Bodega and at Ross. This same regulation extends to Mr. Sutter's heirs in case of his death, if this misfortune occurs before the formal completion of this agreement and if they refuse the payment mentioned in art. 4.

Art. 10. It is agreed that in case of war between Russia and any other nation, the Mexican Republic will look out for the enemies of the Russian Empire, and, if for the same reason it is not possible to send ships to get the produce at the time fixed above, the sanctity of this agreement shall remain inviolable, and as soon as peace is restored, it shall resume its full force.

Art. 11. It is agreed that the Russian-American Company, desiring to aid Mr. Sutter, is ready to transport to Bodega from Ross all real property whose transportation is not too troublesome, such as, for example, sashes, windows, doors, and all other small things that can be transported in our hide boats and in the

large launch. Transportation will be begun at once and should last until the arrival of a ship from the port of New Archangel, or Bodega, or that of St. Francis. At that time the people who have remained there are to be embarked without delay and Mr. Sutter will enter into possession of everything and will continue the transportation in his own way.

To give this agreement full force and value we sign it and affix our seals.

(Signed) P. KOSTROMITINOFF

J. A. SUTTER

[Place for seal.]

San Francisco, December 13, 1841

Francisco Guerrero, Justice of Peace of this place; before me there appeared Don Pedro Kostromitinoff and Don Juan Sutter to whom I granted the powers which they used in signing an agreement written in French concerning the movable property and chattels at the settlement of Ross. Each signed and in red pencil, as is proper for them, beneath the said signature those who witnessed signing with me and that of the guarantors, to which I set my hand and seal.

FRANCISCO GUERRERO

J. A. SUTTER

J. J. VIOGET

JACOB P. LEESE.

True copy. J. F. POPOFF.

XXV

KOSTROMITINOFF TO ALVARADO

(Vallejo, *Documentos*, XXXIII, 251. Original in Spanish. San Francisco, December 19, 1841.)

Your Excellency,

On my last visit to Monterey I had the honor to state to you that my intentions were to sell Ross with its real estate and furniture to some of the private individuals in California. Your Excellency's answer was that as far as these affairs were concerned there could be no interference on your part. In this present letter I have the pleasure to declare that Ross is sold to Captain J. Sutter, a resident and naturalized citizen of Mexico, in accord with a contract signed by him and registered with the justice of this district. Among the several points of of the above mentioned contract the following is made.

Art. 9. "The Russian American Company is entirely convinced of Mr. Sutter's promptness in payment, but in order to insure the contract and for unforeseen chances, up until the time of the payment of the total mentioned his settlement on the Sacramento River, called New Helvetia, established with the permission of the Government of California and authorized by the proper documents, with all its movable and fixed property shall be a *guarantee*. Also all the buildings at Bodega and Chlebnicoff and Tchernich ranches, which Mr. Sutter intends to leave intact and in their possession, shall serve as a *guarantee*, so that if the payment is not completed, the Russian American Company shall again enter into its proprietary rights at Bodega and at Ross. In the same way the same conditions

are to be extended to Mr. J. Sutter's heirs in case of his death, if that occurs before the fulfillment of the present contract and the said heirs have not completed the payment mentioned."

In ending my letter I have the honor to state to you that the employees and inhabitants of the settlement of Ross embarked on board the Russian American Company's brigantine *Constantin* for Sitka.

I repeat my assertions of respect and high esteem and I am your excellency's most obedient servant.

P. KOSTROMITINOFF (Rubric)

To His Excellency, the Governor
of the Californias, J. B. Alvarado
San Francisco, December 19, 1841

XXVI

CONTEMPORARY DESCRIPTION OF FORT ROSS AND BODEGA BY A FRENCH VISITOR
(Dufлот de Mofras, Eugene, *Exploration du territoire de l'Oregon, des Californies et de la Mer Vermeille, exécutée pendant les années 1840, 1841 et 1842*, 2 vols., Paris, 1844, Vol. II, pp. 13-14.)

The fort of Ross with its beautiful gardens is in a superb situation; there exists nothing more picturesque nor grander than the forests of gigantic pines which encircle it. Ross appears as a quadrilateral of eighty meters frontage, at the center of which is stationed the house of the governor, those of the officers, the arsenal, the barracks, the magazines, and a Greek chapel surmounted by a cross and belfry of very attractive appearance. The enclosure, formed by thick timbers, is four meters in height; it is pierced by openings protected by cannon, and at opposite corners two hexagonal bastions are erected, of two floors, and armed with six guns. The other principal establishments, such as of Kostromitinoff, Vasili, Klebnikoff, and Don George Tschernick, the employment buildings, the farm-houses, the guard-house and the houses of the officers are surrounded by gardens and built of wood adorned with very pretty ornaments. These houses, called *isba* by the Russians, resemble the Muscovite villages. At the port of Bodega there are only two or three small dwelling-houses of pilots and the chief of the port; but the magazines are large; they serve to hold the merchandise, the grains, the barrels of meats, the hides, and the naval rigging and apparatus.

Each farm has bath-houses, large dwelling lodges for the Indians, wind and hand mills, granaries and tobacco dryers. The great workshops of carpenters, blacksmiths, coopers and marine carpenters are situated below Fort Ross, along the little creek where the vessels anchor.

XXVII

CONTEMPORARY COMMENT OF THE GOVERNOR OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY
REGARDING THE ABANDONMENT OF FORT ROSS

(Simpson, Sir George, *Narrative of a Journey Round the World During the Years 1841 and 1842*, 2 vols., London, Vol. I, p. 270.)

Under these circumstances, the Russians lately entered into an arrangement with the Hudson's Bay Company for obtaining the requisite supply of grain and other provisions at a moderate price; and they have accordingly, within a few weeks, transferred their stock to a Swiss adventurer of the name of Sutter, and are now engaged in withdrawing all their people from the country.

XXVIII

SUTTER—PURCHASE OF THE RUSSIAN PROPERTY

(Sutter, John A., *Diary*, 3. [Paging of Bancroft Library clippings of diary as published in the *San Francisco Argonaut*, Jan. 26 and Feb. 2, 9 and 16, 1878.]

September 4th 1841. Arrived the Russian Gov Mr. Alexander Rottieff [sic] on board the Schooner Sacramento, and offered me their whole establishment at Bodega & Ross for sale, and invited me to come right of with him, as there is a Russian Vessel at Bodega, and some Officers with plain power, to transact this business with me, and particularly they would give me the preference, as they became all acquainted with me during a months stay at Sitka. I left and went with him down to the Bay in Company with Capt. Ringold's Expedition, what for a fleet we thought then, is on the River. Arriving at Bodega, we came very soon to terms, from there we went to fort Ross where they showed me everything and returned to Bodega again, and before the Vessel sailed we dined on board the Helena, and closed the bargain for \$30,000, which has been paid. And other property, was a separate account which has been first paid.

On the 28th of September I dispatched a number of men and my clerk by Land to Bodega, to receive the Cattle, Horses, Mules & Sheep, to bring them up to Sutter's fort, called then New Helvetia, by crossing the Sacramento the lost me from about 2000 head about a 100, which drowned in the River, but of most of them we could save the hides, our Cal. Bank-notes at the time,

I did send a Clerk with some men in charge of these Establishments and left the necessary horses and Cattle there, the Schooner Sacramento kept up the communication between the Coast and here, and brought me as freight the Lumber, to finish the House in the fort, I was just building and erecting the fort at the time in Aug. & Sept. for protection of the Indians and of the Californians which became very jealous seeing these fortifications and 12 Canons and a field piece mounted, and two other brass pieces unmounted at the time.

XXIX

SUTTER—RECOLLECTIONS OF THE PURCHASE

(Sutter, John A., Personal Reminiscences, MS, 54-59, Bancroft Library.)

On his return Captain Ringgold again visited me. While he was yet in the camp a Russian schooner, with Governor Rotcheff on board, arrived from Fort Ross and offered to sell me the place. It did not prove a good wheat country, furs were getting scarce, and the expenses were greater than the income. This was the first I knew that they wanted to sell, and I was surprised that they should come to me. The governor at Sitka had instructed the governor at Fort Ross to offer me the place, and had sent an agent, Kostro Mitinoff to complete the arrangements.

Rotcheff told me there were others standing ready to purchase, Vallejo, Lease, and others but that the governor at Sitka, having greater confidence in me said that I should have the preference. He then requested me to accompany him to Bodega, which I did. We went down the river in his schooner and landed at San Rafael, where we found horses with Russian servants, ready to carry us to Bodega. We passed the night in a farm house near the port of Bodega, about a mile from the port. Kostro Mitinoff was there, and the captain of the ship *Helena* then lying at anchor in the port of Bodega was there.

After supper, a formal offer was made to sell me the Russian establishment at Bodega and Fort Ross by Kostro Mitinoff on behalf of the Russian government. The price was \$30,000, two thousand dollars cash included the schooner that Rotcheff went up to Sutter's Fort in, then lying at San Rafael, and the stores at Ross. The \$30,000 was for the houses, farms, cattle and implements at Bodega and Fort Ross. This amount I was to pay in produce, in yearly installments, chiefly in wheat at \$2 the fanega. No time was specified. The Russians were to send down every year their vessel and take whatever wheat I could give them, (When the gold-discovery broke out I yet owed them a balance and the miner's destroying my crop I was obliged to pay them the balance in gold) The \$2000. included the schooner before mentioned and the store goods, merchandise, then at Fort Ross. This was cash. I accepted the offer. The deed was written in French, beginning "With the consent of the Emperor of all the Russias" To be signed witnessed and acknowledged before an alcalde we had to go to Yerba Buena. Before setting out for Yerba Buena however, we had a grand dinner on board the *Helena*. Champagne flowed freely; the Emperor's health was drank and the health of the new owner of Ross and Bodega, At Saucelito was then lying another Russian Vessel the *Naslednic Alexander*.

Before the document was signed I was thus the acknowledged owner of all the Russian possessions in California, and before I set out for Yerba Buena the Russians began to abandon their place, some taking passage on board the *Helena* and some on the *Alexander*. I wanted some of the Russians to remain with me as hired men, but the officers told me I could do nothing with them, that they could hardly manage them, & that they were sure I could not be severe enough.

I then embarked in a small boat via Golden Gate for Yerba Buena. The boat was manned by four powerful Russians. Rotcheff accompanied me. The tide was against us, the sea ran high and we narrowly escaped drowning. I said to Rotcheff, your tyranny over your men is so complete that they will carry you to destruction if you tell them to. Landing safely at Yerba Buena at last, we proceeded to the office of the Hudson's Bay Company, where the alcalde joined us and the papers were executed. They required from me no note nor any paper of any kind. They treated me very liberally, sending me by the vessel that came for grain, supplies that were very necessary to me iron, steel, amunition, &c. I had more amunition at one time than the government had. After the deed was signed I paid over the two thousand dollars in money and the transfer was complete. The Russians had had trouble with the Spaniards and preferred that I should have the property.

I then returned to the Fort, and when I reached it emigration had set in from the States. I immediately sent a clerk, a young Englishman, Robert Ridley from Yerba Buena over to Ross and Bodega to take possession. Very few emigrants had come in before this time.



GENERAL VIEW OF FORT ROSS, AND ONE OF THE BASTIONS
(From Bidwell, John, "Life in California before the Gold Discovery," *Century Magazine*,
Vol. XLI, No. 2, Dec. 1890.)